

SENSE AND SENTIMENT.

BY LOUISE S. DORR.

I.

A PAIR OF LOVERS.

"FUDGE, Lillias."

"Don't be impolite, if you please."

"Fudge, I say."

"Allow me to say that 'fudge' is a low word. One would think you had been brought up—"

"Among the Aborigines? Well, I wasn't. You may lay that comforting unction to your soul."

"No. The Aborigines are very dignified in the use of language, I have heard. But about Gideon Saunders and his letter. I cannot overcome my impression that this man is our natural enemy."

"And to that impression of yours, I simply remark, 'Fudge.' To think of your wishing to sacrifice the advantages he offers us to an impression! It is lucky that one of us was not spun too fine to admit of a little common sense in our grain. But let us sift this thing. Here are we—two reduced gentlewomen—though one of us is undignified enough to say 'fudge.' Talent we have not. And if we had, it would not support us until put to school for several years to Experience. Money we have not, nor strength to live on as we have been living. Now comes a letter from one Mr. Gideon Saunders. We never heard of the man before, but no matter. He writes—where is his letter?"

"Here it is, and this is what he writes:

"'To Miss Lillias'—he wrote Eltonwell, but that is lined out, and Bennett substituted. 'To Miss Lillias Bennett, and the Other One. Madams,—I have heard that you are at present supporting yourselves with sewing, which I think must be a hard way of getting one's bread. Your father was my cousin. If you choose to accept a home with me, it is freely yours. You will confer a charity by doing so, too, for I am but a lonely old man. I should like you to come on Monday next week, if possible. Awaiting your reply, I am yours to command, GIDEON SAUNDERS.'"

"Yes, that is it, and a very nice letter, I am sure. Nor, to my perception, is there any odor of poison about the sheet nor its

envelop. What your impression of a natural enemy can come from is beyond my apprehension."

"And beyond mine, too; but so are many things which, though unexplainable, really exist; and it would be foolish, I suppose, to let my impression influence us. You think, I see, that we ought to accept what Mr. Saunders offers."

"Certainly I do. If we find it worse than shifting for ourselves, our present magnificent opportunities will still be open to us. Work to the Song of the Shirt, that is, with a little bread and garret, and a good deal of sideache thrown in."

"Shall I write to Mr. Saunders, or will you?"

"You, as the elder sister should report, I think; but do keep your impression behind the scene, if you can."

Lillias set about her task with a smothered sigh. She presently offered what she had written for her sister's inspection, and Madge read aloud:

"'MR. SAUNDERS,—Your letter was a great surprise to us. We did not even know that we had such a relative. No wind, nor bird, nor bounding wave had ever whispered to us the name of Gideon Saunders. But since your intentions seem so friendly, and our circumstances are such as to make a change desirable, we thank you, and will, for a time at least, make trial of the home you offer us.

"'We will come on Monday, as you wish. Obediently yours,

"'LILLIAS AND MADGE BENNETT.'"

"Well, that will do. Mr. Saunders will probably think it very negligent of the wind, and bird, and wave, that they have never mentioned him to us, but I don't see what he can do about it. Then there certainly is a forefoot of the impression sticking through the words, 'make a trial of the home you offer us.'"

"Don't, Madge. I have given up my convictions to yours. Now please let us hear no more about it, nor about Mr. Saunders, until we have seen him, and can judge from personal knowledge."

"As you please. Here is the last shirt finished. I wonder if we shall have money enough for the journey without taking any more work? It does not seem to me as if I ever could get through another dozen."

"I think we can get along without doing any more. We shall have little time, too, for repairing our clothes."

"What style of living do you suppose Gideon Saunders supports? But I forgot. That is a tabooed subject. Are you going with me to take home this bundle—delectable, in that it is our last."

"Not if you are willing to go alone, dear, I am so tired."

Madge professed her willingness to go alone, but thought, as she set off, that she understood why Lillias had chosen not to go.

"She thinks Tret Brashington will see me pass alone, and snap up the opportunity for seeing her, as a cat does a mouse. Blessed be Gideon Saunders for this—that I shall now be able to get Lillias away from Brashington, if for nothing else. There he goes. I knew it would be so. Why don't Lillias have an impression that he is a downright snake in the grass? I would be an invincible believer in impressions forever after, if she would."

Madge's penetration was not at fault. Tret, or without abbreviation, Trevet Brashington, made haste to improve his opportunity for seeing Lillias alone. They met as lovers meet. A pretty pair of lovers, too. She fair, and pure, and sweet as a snowdrop. He with enough of the Narcissus beauty to have fallen in love with his own reflection, like the silly youth of mythology. Perhaps he had done so, for it is beyond question that Tret Brashington held a high opinion of his own fascinations.

"I thought you would come, Tret," said Lillias. "I made Madge go alone on purpose. How glad I am that you did not disappoint me! Did you feel my soul drawing yours, dear, and impelling you to come?"

"There was no need of that, my life. My soul would have drawn me here of itself long ago, if I had not restrained it."

"Perhaps you guessed that I had some news for you—as I have. We are going away, Tret."

"So you have decided?"

"Yes."

"To go?"

"Yes. You think it for the best, do you not?"

"I have not expressed my opinion yet."

"But you do not object. You did not last night. I thought you favored the plan, or I should not have consented."

"When do you go?"

"On Monday."

"It is best for you, of course. You can't expect me to go into raptures over it, though, since it will separate us."

"Separate us! How?" questioned Lillias, clinging to him, and looking up with frightened eyes.

"By many miles of distance. We can scarcely hope to meet oftener than once or twice a year."

"But we can write."

"A poor exchange. Salt codfish for turkey. I don't object, mind. If this Gideon Saunders—that is what you called him, I believe—should do his duty, you will be the better off for the change."

"And you, too, Tret. Don't think I am going to be idle. I shall work and save there. Here I can only work and spend."

"You had better leave the working for me. I am getting on better since I have an object to inspire me. I hope our waiting may close by the end of a year. Only, my life, don't let Madge turn you against me. She is as bitter as ever, I fear."

"Not bitter, but a little prejudiced. It will wear away. And you know, Tret, nothing can ever turn me against you. She is coming now. Will you not stay to see her?"

"No; she would not appreciate the attention if I did. I never saw a young lady like her. But you are my Lily Queen. My life, good-by."

II.

GIDEON SAUNDERS.

MONDAY evening found the sisters nearing their new home. Madge was all excitement. Lillias felt an ungovernable dread. She shivered with nervousness, as, their station reached, she stepped out upon the platform.

"I wish Mr. Saunders would not come for us. I wish that we were going back," she said.

"Don't be a goose, Lillias. What is it you fear?" returned Madge.

Lillias did not reply, for she saw a gentleman advancing toward them, a tall man, whose full black beard scarcely served to relieve the thin bloodless face which it set off.

"He is a vampire," whispered Lillias, with a look of aversion and terror.

Madge pinched her sister's arm, any other reply being out of the question, since the gentleman was already at her elbow.

"Are these my wards?" he inquired, extending a hand to both.

"Yes, if you are Mr. Saunders," replied Madge, seeing that Lillias was unfit for speech.

"I am Gideon Saunders. The carriage is this way. Will you follow me, young ladies?"

It was not an easy thing to do, for his walk was as near a run as it could be and keep its distinctive tittle. But Madge managed to pull along the shrinking Lillias, and to keep their escort in sight. Both were palpitating and out of breath when they reached the carriage.

"A pleasant day, young ladies," the gentleman remarked.

"Yes—very," returned Madge, again pinching her sister's arm.

It had been raining for an hour, and daylight had been gone as long. She was beginning to think there was something a little queer about Mr. Gideon Saunders.

He gave his hand to help them into the carriage. Madge felt through her glove that it was a very cold hand.

"If I were as imaginative as Lillias, I don't know but I could believe him a vampire," she reflected. "What is he looking for now, I wonder?"

He answered, as if she had spoken her inquiry aloud:

"It is the other one. She was here a minute ago. Where has she gone?" he questioned, with a puzzled look.

"Here we are—both of us," said Madge, leaning forward.

"Yes—so you are. I was thinking there was another one—but— Yes, we are all here. Drive on, Catiline."

"Is it far?" asked Lillias, as Mr. Saunders seated himself in front of her, and, by the light of a street lamp which happened to fall upon her strongly, gazed intently in her face.

"Not far, but we shall be longer going for having Catiline to drive. Catiline is a very careful driver. That is why I took him. I'm a little reckless that way myself sometimes. I might have frightened you, Miss Eltonwell."

"Bennett," corrected Lillias. "Eltonwell was my mother's name."

"Yes, so it was," returned Mr. Saunders; and he did not speak again during the drive.

Despite the boasting of Catiline's master, it was a mad drive. Never before had they been whirled along at such a rate. Up hill

and down dale the horses pushed along furiously, not once abating their speed until they drew up before a massive brown stone house, which had its front windows profusely illuminated.

"What is Catiline stopping for? O, so we are here? Is it the anniversary of anything? I had forgotten, if it is," said Mr. Saunders, springing from the carriage, and bolting for the house at full speed, without a word to the companions of his drive.

"Polite?" muttered Lillias under her breath.

"I wonder if he expects us to spend the night here?" observed Madge, with some asperity.

Catiline, after unloading the trunks, came around to the young ladies.

"I expect the master's forgotten you," he said, grinning. "Nothing uncommon for him. You'd better get out, and I'll show you the way."

But here Mr. Saunders came hurrying back, a towel, with which he seemed to be drying his hands, flapping grotesquely as he ran.

"Beg your pardon, Miss Eltonwell and the other one. I didn't think. Come in, and most welcome. Hope you'll make yourselves at home here. Mrs. Cannon! Mrs. Cannon!"

His voice rang through the house like a volley of musketry.

"Coming?" shouted a wheezy voice in return; and presently a short stout woman came waddling in. Mr. Saunders became aware now of the towel he held, and retreated suddenly.

"So you are come, my dears?" Mrs. Cannon said. "I wonder the master did not forget to bring you. But I told Catiline to give him a nudge at the depot."

"He did forget that he had brought us. I thought we were to be left in the carriage all night. Why are you illuminated so brilliantly?" returned Madge.

"Bless us! that was in honor of your coming. It was according to the master's orders. There's a fire in your room, and supper will be ready by the time you get your things off. You'll have to take your tea alone. The master never eats supper."

Mrs. Cannon led the way to their room, waddling on with such an appearance of being discommoded by her weight, that one could but think small wheels, like those of the war-engine she was named for, would greatly help her locomotion.

"What do you think, Madge?" questioned

Lillas, as soon as they were alone in their room.

"I think it is going to be jolly," declared Madge, executing a pirouette.

"You have an extraordinary taste, I think, if this pleases you."

"It diverts me exceedingly. Think of Mr. Saunders ordering an illumination on our account, and then forgetting that he had brought us! And rushing out with that towel dangling! I shall laugh myself to pieces, I think. What if we were to be shut up in our room and forgotten altogether? But that motherly Cannon will at least see that we are not starved."

They found their room commodious, with appointments costly and in good taste. One thing alone was not in keeping with the rest. That was the bureau—an old-fashioned pine affair, painted a dark smoky red, and furnished with tarnished brass handles.

"An heirloom, I suppose," said Madge, surveying this piece of furniture. "A Saunders ancestor brought it over in the Mayflower, probably."

"I believe he came over in the Mayflower himself. He is the Wandering Jew, I am sure," returned Lillas.

"I have not seen a list of passengers by the Mayflower lately, but I don't think the Wandering Jew was one of them. Then you are giving yourself much too distinguished a lineage; Mr. Saunders was our father's cousin, you know."

They did not see their relative again that night, nor at breakfast next day, nor yet at dinner; but Mrs. Cannon brought them substantial proof that he had not forgotten them. Two well-filled pocket-books, that is, a blue one for "Miss Eltonwell," and a wine-colored for "the Other One."

"The master said I was to send you off to buy yourselves some finery," Mrs. Cannon declared. "Catiline is getting the carriage for you now. O, and he said—the master, I mean—that you were not to stint yourselves. He should wish his wards to look smart enough to do credit to his establishment."

"Do you ever have company here?" asked Madge.

"Dear me, yes, when the master gets his company fit on. It takes him sometimes all a sudden. I've known him to have twenty guests asked to dinner, and no notice given till they began to come. Once he invited a round company and forgot it altogether. When they came, he'd gone off to Boston.

They'd have got a fine affront if it had been anybody else; but nobody minds him. I set to work and whipped up the best dinner I could. It wasn't such a mean set-down, either. I always keep tolerably prepared for such surprises, now I've got the hang of the master's ways. Mathurin, he did the honors, and they had a right good time of it, after all."

"Who is Mathurin?"

"Mathurin? Don't you know him? Well, he's Mathurin Wheatleigh. I expect the master means for one of you to marry him, though I oughtn't to have let that out, maybe. He thinks the world of Mathurin, the master does. Run, now, dears. There's Catiline with the carriage, and you not half ready, all along of my gossiping. Do hurry, for the horses won't wait. They are as much like the master about that as two peas in a pod."

"This grows better and better," laughed Madge, as they ran up stairs. "Shall we toss up for Mathurin? On second thoughts, though, I'll be generous and leave him to you, dear."

"I appreciate your spirit of self-sacrifice, but could not think of robbing you. You are quite welcome to Mathurin, for my part. Undoubtedly he is a companion-piece to his friend Salathiel."

"That may or may not be. Look at those horses, Lillas. They are starting and plunging like wild creatures. There! Off they go! Catiline has sprung upon the box, and we are ingloriously left behind."

"Catiline will probably come back for us if he escapes being wrecked."

They waited in readiness for an hour. Then Catiline came. The horses were white with foam, but did not seem much subdued by their mad race.

"I am almost afraid to get in," said Lillas.

"Nothing to fear, miss. You never heard of the d—l going to wreck, did you? No more will these horses, I can warrant you," replied Catiline.

Thus assured, Lillas followed Madge into the carriage. They went first to a dry goods store, and asked for dress silks. To their notions, gathered in a garret, where reduction had been the main rule in their arithmetic (the reduction of things needed to the compass of their narrow means), the prices seemed appalling.

"Have you nothing cheaper?" asked Lillas, full of her purpose to save for Tret Brashington's and her own future.

"Are you not Mr. Saunders's wards?" asked the shopkeeper.

"Yes."

"Then we have orders to show you none but our best goods."

They had to take such things as were set before them accordingly—silks that would stand alone, and laces rare and costly. What they spent that day would have kept them a year in their garret.

Lilias began to question within herself how she was to carry out the purpose of working and saving that she had avowed to Tret. The problem became a more perplexing one as the days went on. Once she hinted to Madge that they might be earning money for a rainy day, rather than sitting in idleness; but Madge was too sharp-sighted to encourage the plan.

Finally this trouble gave place to a new one. Tret Brashington seemed to have forgotten his betrothed. Lilias had received two letters from him. Then they ceased to come. At first she wrote on trustfully and tenderly, and conned again and again her woman's lesson of waiting. But at last she grew tired of this one-sided correspondence, and ceased to write.

No confidences passed between the sisters on this subject. Madge's dislike of her brother-elect made that impossible. But in the pale face and drooping manner of Lilias, in her languor and indifference to everything except the coming and going of the postman, which always caused her a spasm of agitation, in her ready appropriation to herself of every heart-broken wail which she read, Madge divined the secret of her sister's suffering. Ay, and pitied her; but as we pity a child that has been punished for its good. It was a thorny way, she knew, but better this than disappointment and heartache for a lifetime.

They saw little meantime of their guardian. If he had been a lonely man before their coming—as his letter stated—he was no less so now. He rarely breakfasted or dined with them, and supper he never ate. The money with which he kept them liberally supplied was usually sent by Mrs. Cannon, always with the injunction added that they were to buy themselves some finery with it. Once or twice when he met them richly dressed he expressed satisfaction at the change in their appearance, and once he told them that their coming had done him good.

"What does he do, shut up all the time in

his room?" inquired Madge, who felt great curiosity about their guardian's habits.

"O, I expect he makes experiments and things," replied Mrs. Cannon. "He's a chemist, and always studying into something. He has found out lots of things, and given them away to people that have got rich out of them. He never seems to care about his discoveries after they are made, but he is always possessed to be finding out things."

III.

MATHURIN.

MRS. CANNON came to the girls one day in a great fluster.

"The master has invited company to dinner," she said, breathlessly; "Mathurin and a lot more people. You'd better be fixing on your finest finery. That is what he said. There are pearls for Miss Eltonwell (he never will say Miss Bennett), and rubies for the Other One, in a secret drawer of your bureau. You'll have to hunt for the spring. I'd stay to help you if I could, but I've got my hands full clean up to the shoulder-blades."

Saying this, she waddled off, and the girls were left to their own devices.

"A secret drawer? How romantic!" cried Madge.

"What if it were to contain something unexpected—something terrible?" articulated Lilias, with white lips.

"What if we were to be reasonable creatures for once in our lives, and do our best to gratify the master, as they call him here? Do you get ready, Lilias, while I look for our jewels. I can dress twice as quickly as you."

With a sigh Lilias withdrew from the old red bureau before which they were standing to their dressing-room. Madge examined intelligently the piece of furniture before her, and decided where the hidden drawer must be. Then, passing her hand over the surface—as if she had rubbed Aladdin's lamp, and the thing sought had been its genius—a shallow till popped out before her. It contained no gems, but something unexpected, as Lilias had suggested. A picture of their mother, and a small vial half filled with a virulent-looking green powder. Likewise a fragment of paper containing the words, "For love of Marcia Eltonwell, I swear eternal enmity to my cousin Silas Bennett."

Madge stood a moment confounded.

"I am glad Lilias did not find these," she

thought, when her brain had recovered its power of action. "Mr. Gideon Saunders, I shall have to ask you for an explanation of these things."

Thinking thus, she snapped the till back into its place, and, having satisfied herself by examination of the outer surface, that there was room for another like it, sought until that was likewise found. The pearls and rubies were here, rare enough to excite the admiration of an empress. Madge silently gave those designated for Liliás into her hand, and silently began her own task of dressing. But she did not put on the rubies she had found, nor any article of dress given her by Mr. Saunders. She had brought one black silk dress, which was quite presentable when she came here, and this she wore. For ornaments she put on scarlet fuschias. The dress became her well; but Liliás, in her *sheeny lapis-lazuli blue*, and those pearls of wonderful size and purity, looked a very goddess. She did not notice Madge's costume until both had finished dressing. Then she said:

"Why, Madge! You are not going down in that old thing?"

"Be respectful, if you please, to what a little while ago was my best dress. Yes; I am going down in this. I promised to leave Mathurin to you, if you remember. There would probably be no chance of his noticing me, in any event. There certainly will be none now."

"How queer you are, Madge! There, Mr. Saunders is calling us. We shall have to go down."

Their guardian met them at the door and led them in. His face was as thin and bloodless as when they knew him first, but his eyes had a very animated expression. There was one other gentleman in the room.

"Please to remember," whispered Madge to their relative, "that Liliás is Miss Bennett, not Eltonwell."

He dropped her hand, stopped and looked at her with a frown. His eyes took in her costume, the plainly-made black silk, with flowers for ornaments, and his frown deepened. He seemed on the point of escaping from the room, but after passing a hand once or twice across his forehead, recovered his usual manner.

"I'll not forget," he said. "Do you stand here, Miss Bennett and Miss Madge. I will bring my friend to you."

It was Mathurin Wheatleigh, as Madge

had already guessed. He was a younger man than she had expected to see—not above thirty at the most. Sweetness and power were singularly blended in his attractive face. It was not a face to be described, but one to be remembered when once it had been seen. I think no one who had known this gentleman, though but slightly, could ever become quite indifferent to him afterward.

His repose of manner; eyes, lips, the gentle motions of his white slender hands, the very poise of his head, were all magnetic. And Liliás was very impressible.

Madge looked on as these two talked together. Liliás was no longer languid nor indifferent. A fine delicate color warmed in her cheeks. She grew alert, vivacious, merry.

"Mathurin is better than Tret Brashington—better and truer," Madge thought, approvingly. "Whatever has been and whatever may be, I am glad that we came here. But not the less, Mr. Gideon Saunders, must there be an explanation betwixt you and me."

Thinking thus, she looked up suddenly, and found her guardian's eyes regarding her with a steady appealing gaze.

The room was half filled by this time. Ladies and gentlemen, in the usual variety one meets in good society, were gathered in knots, or walking up and down. Mr. Saunders, from the opposite end of the parlor, made his way through to where Madge was standing.

"You called me?" he said.

"No!"

"Your eyes did. What is it? Why did you not dress yourself as I wished?"

"Because there are two secret drawers in our bureau, and I opened the wrong one."

"I see now. Fool that I was to forget myself so. I shall never be fit to trust myself. It is my bane—my punishment."

He was pulling the fingers first of his right then of his left hand through its fellow in a quick agitated way. His hands, like his face, were thin and bloodless. All his vigorous working of these members brought no color to the bruised skin.

"You have great penetration, Madge," he said, after a time. "What inference do you draw from the things you found?"

"None. I have purposely withheld myself from doing so until I have your explanation."

"Yet you would not wear my gifts?"

"No. The heart for finery had somehow gone out of me. But Liliás—she is radiant, is she not?"

"She is; and Mathurin is as much pleased

as I could wish. He is better than Brashington. You will not interfere?"

"Certainly not in favor of Brashington. I have always distrusted him."

"It is what I should expect from your penetration. He is not fit to be trusted. But Mathurin is as true as gold. There are not many like him left to society now."

"He seems a true gentleman."

"He is; and young men now-a-days are either Sir Oracles or harlequins. Mathurin is as little the one as the other. I am glad you like him. And for the explanation, it shall be to-night, as soon as these people are gone. You will find me in this room. Never fear."

At this moment dinner was announced. Madge was taken down by a heavy bald-headed gentleman—a good liver, evidently, and a man on easy terms with himself and the world. Mathurin escorted Lillas, and Mr. Saunders gave his arm to a Mrs. Lester, the wife of an ex-governor. The dinner was served in state, yet, to Madge's infinite relief, there was no formality, no restraint. She had expected that it would all be very cumbersome. On the contrary, easy discourse, raillery and laughter were tossed from guest to guest, like the balls in battledore. This was mostly due to Mathurin. He was a sort of social yeast-ball, with power to keep all in a state of effervescence. Lillas, too, was a shining mark for admiration. Every one praised her beauty. Whatever she said gained respectful attention from all within hearing. It was a charmed gathering, of which she and Mathurin formed its nucleus.

Madge saw all this, but without bitterness or envy. Her great love made the triumphs of Lillas her own.

Gideon Saunders saw it, too, with evident delight; but an anxious glance at Madge now and then showed that he was not quite at ease.

The third course was just on when a new guest arrived—Tret Brashington. Mathurin, who had been radiating convivial warmth and geniality, stiffened at once. Mr. Saunders knit his brows to a frown, but said, shortly, "How do you do, Brashington?"

Then, forgetful, apparently, that the feast was not ended, he rose from the table. He was recalled by Madge's convivial escort.

"See here, Saunders. We are not going to let you off so. We have hardly taken the edge off our appetites yet. Sit down. Sit down. You are forgetting yourself again, you know."

"I believe I am. I beg your pardon, all."

He sat down as he spoke. Mathurin, who had followed him in rising, did likewise. Lillas looked like a fluttered dove, startled and palpitating. She had barely nodded to Brashington when he came in. Various emotions were contending within her. It had been weeks since she heard from Tret. At first she had trusted in spite of neglect, but lately she had come to feel herself slighted and scorned. He might have come now to explain. If faithful himself, he might feel aggrieved by her acceptance of Mathurin's attentions. Then she became aware all at once that she had found those attentions very agreeable, and blushed like an opening rose at the discovery.

Mathurin had just bent his head to speak to her. It was only some courtesy of the table that he offered, but Brashington, seeing the act and the blush, put his own interpretation upon them. He cast volumes of reproach at Lillas in a look, thus adding to her distress.

Madge was upon thorns, dreading that all which had been gained was lost by this untoward appearance. Brashington had meantime been given a place at the table, and was eating his dinner with unabashed assurance.

"I builded better than I knew," he said, unctuously. "I expected to see Mr. Saunders and the young ladies, but not a convivial gathering like this."

"That is like buying ten acres of prairie, and having it turn out the site of a city," observed Madge's escort.

"Or, possibly, like bargaining for a nice cosy homestead and getting a Gilmore Coliseum," chimed in the ex-governor's wife.

"Or, more probably, like planning to steal a chicken and walking into the midst of a husking party," said Madge, in a low voice to Mathurin.

"The chicken shall be defended—never fear," he replied, in a similar tone.

When the ladies left the table, Mathurin, and Brashington, likewise, followed to the parlor. As if in obedience to the former gentleman's will, a knot of ladies made a wall around himself and Lillas, impenetrable to the other. Madge stood upon the outer verge of the wall, glancing defiance at Brashington. He had taken refuge in a conversation with an exclamatory young lady, who, for her part in a joint stock company for discourse, was always ready to furnish an unlimited supply of interjections.

"Who is this Brashington?" asked Mrs. Lester, at Mathurin's right.

"He was Mr. Saunders's adopted son and student in chemistry."

"O, I think I remember something about him. He put a powerful explosive into one of the retorts used by Mr. Saunders, did he not?"

"Yes—powerful enough to reduce a man to powder, if it had not been discovered. It was just a week after a will had been made in Brashington's favor."

"There must be some mistake," spoke up Lillias, all the woman roused within her to the defence of her lover. "The forgetfulness of Mr. Saunders is known to every one. He might have placed the explosive substance where it was found."

"Mr. Saunders never forgets in matters of that sort. Then, unfortunately for your defence, I chanced to be at work in a closet opening from the laboratory, with a half-glass door between. I regret to say that I saw the culprit at his nefarious work. If this does not satisfy you, look at him now. I think he must have divined what I am telling you. See if his condemnation is not written in his face."

Lillias looked and saw the face of a fiend. She turned quickly away from the revelation, and seemed groping for support. Madge, who had somehow made her way to the centre, threw an arm promptly around her sister, and whispered:—

"Be strong, dear. We will all help you to bear it."

The weakness of the moment passed, and Lillias was strong.

None but the sisters, and probably Mathurin, knew what drama was played to its bitter end in what had passed so quietly.

Later in the evening Brashington found the chance he had sought of speaking to Lillias.

"What am I to think of your conduct?" he asked. "Why do you avoid me so? And why have you answered none of my letters?"

"I have received no letters from you since the first week I was here."

"I knew it. These people have been keeping them from you. They have been telling lies about me to-night. That Mathurin is my bitterest enemy."

"Why did you make him such by your wickedness? How dared you come here among people who knew all?"

"So you are ready to believe every lie trumped against me."

"I believed nothing until I read your condemnation in your face. You cannot look at me steadily now."

"Come, Lillias, my life. You love me too well to mean what you are saying. My soul appeals to yours—my love to your love. Mr. Saunders will not dare stand in our way. I have found a Roland for his Oliver, and Mathurin—I did not expect to find him here, but I shall silence him somehow. Lillias, I have come to claim my bride—my other soul."

"Your other soul should be akin to the soul within you. Do not think to move me by your sentimental appeals."

"Is this the way you keep faith with me?"

"Give me back yourself—the man I believed in, trusted in."

"I thought a woman's love was unchangeable."

"That must be when love is grounded upon respect. Good-by. I wish you well, but I desire never to see you again."

She left him with these words, and made her way to Madge. The interview had been very exhausting. Madge was strong. Lillias wanted her to lean upon.

"I should have heard to you in the first place, dear," she whispered. "I will never trust to my impressions again, in opposition to your clear good sense."

"Yet there may be something in impressions too. If we could only know how far to trust them, they might be a help to us sometimes. But like most spiritual manifestations, they know no law that is revealed to us. So, dear, it is best to use our judgment in respect of them."

IV.

THE EXPLANATION.

WHEN the company had dispersed, Madge kissed Lillias "good-night" at the door of their room, and said, placidly:

"I am going down for a talk with our guardian. It is at his request, dear. Don't keep awake for me. You have had an exhausting evening, I know."

Mr. Saunders was waiting for her. He came forward as she entered, pulling each hand alternately through its fellow with no gentle movement.

"So you are in haste to bring me to account?" he said, with some anger.

"No; but I did not wish to keep you waiting."

"Well, sit down here," pulling an easy-

chair toward her, "and tell me what it was that you found in the wrong drawer."

"My mother's picture, for one thing."

"Yes."

"And a phial half filled with a green poisonous-looking powder."

"Ah!"

"And a bit of paper, on which, for love of Marcia Eltonwell, you swore eternal enmity to her husband, Silas Bennett."

"Yes, I remember when it was written, and the powder I remember well. It is as poisonous as it looks, but I never murdered Silas Bennett. Yet it is true that at one time I meant to. I prepared that powder, and carried it about me for weeks. The opportunity came at last. He was ill, and I went to watch with him. I mixed some of the drug and gave it to him. Then all in a moment the horrors of hell got hold of me. I felt that unless my deed could be undone, all my life would be one scorching agony. The antidote was in my laboratory. I ran as I never ran before to get it. If he had died, I must have gone mad or died with him. But I was in time, and he was saved. I told him when he grew better what I had done, and that, though I could not let him die by my hands, I hated him still. He was always a coward. I think it was because I frightened him so that he deserted his family. Your mother was not, for years before her death, a widow, as you believed, but a deserted wife. She knew of my enmity to her husband, and would never take aid from me; but I always meant to befriend her children."

"Do you mean," asked Madge, trembling in every limb, "that my father is still alive?"

"He is not. A fortnight ago he was. I heard of him in St. Louis, and sent Mathurin to him. Me he would not have seen, I fear. He was broken down, and poor, and sick. Ten days ago he died. Mathurin watched over him like a son until the last."

"Why was this duty withheld from me—from his children?"

"My dear, his associations and surroundings were such as to make it unfit that you should go. But he died a penitent. He wrote me a forgiving letter at the last, and said he was glad to leave his children in my care. He and Brashington had been boon companions at one time. I think it must have been when Tret first left me. He went to St. Louis when Mathurin was there, and somehow got at the story of my attempt upon your father's life. He probably thought he might use the knowl-

edge against me in case I objected to his marrying Lillias. I think it was from knowing something of my intentions towards her and you that he first sought out the Bennett sisters."

"I always wondered that he could be content to win a portionless bride. He probably hoped to get back some portion of the property his wickedness had forfeited."

"Yes. I should have given him a good part of it if he had turned out as I hoped. Since I am in the confessional, there is something else that should be told. I kept back Brashington's letters to Lillias, at first from forgetfulness. Then when I noticed in what hand they were written, it seemed to me better that she should not have them. I thought it would be easier for her to bear to know his worthlessness when the time came, if she had learned to think of him as faithless to herself. Will you tell her this, and ask her not to hate me for it? I have had a forlorn life. Since that night with Silas Bennett, I have never been quite myself. The strain of intense horror upon nerve and brain brought weakness in a point upon which I had formerly prided myself—the memory. It was worse at first than now, but I have never recovered from it fully, and I never shall. It is my punishment, and not undeserved. I shrink from asking if you can forgive me. Yet it is the one thing that can still bestow sweetness upon the dregs of a wasted life."

"I can, and do. For what you sinned you have amply atoned, I think. I am grateful that your care provided my father a worthy friend at the last, grateful that Lillias has been saved by you from a villain, and grateful for the home which you have given to us both."

"Will Lillias be as forgiving as you are?"

"I hope to assure you to-morrow that she is."

"You will make me almost a happy man if you can. With no other ties of kindred, I have set my heart upon gaining the good-will of Lillias and yourself. Sometimes I have even dreamed that you might learn to love me a little in time—as children love their uncles, or their grandfathers. I believe that Mathurin really does love me. If I could see him and Lillias united—but it is too soon to speak of that. It is late, my dear, and you need rest. Good-night."

"Good-night, dear uncle," said Madge, taking his hand and raising it to her lips.

She left him with a happy peaceful smile

upon his face. In crossing the room, she heard him murmur softly to himself:

"She called me 'dear uncle.' God bless her for it. She called me 'dear uncle.'"

Lilias was still awake, but Madge refused to say a word to her that night—prudently considering that the excitement of the day had already been enough for her imaginative sister.

The following morning brought a full exchange of confidences between them. Then they went down together and boldly pushed

their way to the laboratory, whither they had never dared to venture before.

"We have come to give our best of uncles a good-morning kiss," said Lilias, brightly.

A faint color warmed his face, and he beamed upon them a smile such as the pardoned sinner may wear at the gates of paradise.

And Mathurin married Lilias, not hastily, but after a year's acquaintance. So the desire of the heart of Gideon Saunders was satisfied.



SHE WAS A WIDOW.

BY N. P. DARLING.

Yes, she was a very modest-appearing woman, and she had the sweetest smile and the most innocent-looking face I ever saw. She was a small woman, too, and I always was fond of small women. Her eyes, my dear sir, were black, but unlike some black eyes that you've seen, there was nothing wicked about them. They were regular lamb's eyes, that is, in expression; and, as I said to Grogstar, the first time I saw her, "That woman is an angel. She can't be anything else, with those eyes."

"You're right," cried Grogstar. "She is an angel, if there ever was one in this world."

"What! do you know her?"

"Why, my dear fellow, I knew her when she was a little girl. She's old Cooglesby's daughter. Married Frogsham, poor fellow."

"Why, poor fellow?"

"Dead, you know."

"Is it possible that that young and delicate-looking creature is a widow?"

"It's not only possible, but a fact," said Grogstar. "However, she isn't so very young. I believe she's twenty-eight; and, let me see, you are—"

"Thirty."

"Ah, yes. Well, now my dear Tynear, if you ever think of marrying, I don't know of a woman that would suit you better than Mrs. Frogsham for a wife. Let me introduce you."

"Thank you, I was just going to ask you to present me to the lady."

And that was the way I made the acquaintance of Mrs. Frogsham.

We were all stopping at the hotel at Rocky Beach. Major Grogstar had a room next to mine, and before I had been in the house three days, we were the best of friends; and after he introduced me to my

dear Delia, why, I thought more of him than ever.

I say my dear Delia. Yes, our acquaintance ripened into love, and she confessed that I had won her affections; and her confession was made within three weeks of the day that Grogstar introduced me to this lovely creature.

"Twas on the evening of a day

Which we in love had dreamt away."

as the poet says, that I made my proposal. We were sitting upon a high rock that overhung the sea. I at Delia's feet, looking up into her beautiful eyes. She, looking oceanward, her lamblike countenance illuminated by one of her childlike smiles.

"Delia," said I—and as usual in such cases, I took her hand—"Delia, you are the only woman that I ever loved—the only woman that can make me supremely happy."

As usual in such cases, she did not withdraw her hand.

"O, will you, darling?" getting ready to press her to my bosom.

"Cornelius," she replied, in her sweet flutelike voice, "Cornelius, I've been through with this be—before, therefore, I beg you'll excuse me for any seeming lack of enthusiasm; but believe me, Cornelius, I love you, very, very dearly."

"And may I call you mine?"

"Yes, darling."

Then I took her in my arms, and she laid her beautiful head, with its shining coils of—did I tell you she had black hair? Well she had, and as I was saying, she laid it, head and all, right down upon my bosom, and then put up her lips for a kiss so naturally, and at the same time so artlessly, and with such an innocent childlike smile upon

her countenance, that I could hardly believe she was a widow.

After escorting my beloved back to the hotel that night, I rushed into Grogstar's room to tell him of my good fortune.

I found him sitting by the open window, enjoying the seabreeze, and smoking in a calm and meditative manner. He welcomed me with a cheerful smile, and motioned me to take a seat. But I couldn't sit. I was altogether too full of joy to double up.

"My dear Grogstar," cried I, dancing before him as David danced before the tent, "you behold the happiest man in the world. She is mine."

"Ah, you refer, I suppose, to—the widow?"

"Yes, to my dear Delia. The young, the artless, the dove-eyed, the innocent and unsophisticated creature who—by the way, Grogstar, do you know I cannot think of her as being a widow?"

"But she is, Tynear. Yes, she is a widow. In fact, my dear fellow, I suppose that's what makes her seem so artless. Widows often do. And so she has—"

"She has promised to be mine, Grogstar."

I thought there was a tear in my friend's eye, but it may have been caused by the smoke from his pipe. He grasped my hand.

"Tynear," said he, with evident emotion, "Tynear, I congratulate you. She is a jewel. She is one of a thousand. You are a lucky man to win such a woman, but you don't know it. You think you do, but you don't. You imagine that you are happy, but you've no idea how happy you ought to be, under the circumstances. She is a most remarkable woman, Tynear, but I assure you that—that she is a widow."

Then Grogstar wiped his eyes and resumed his pipe.

"I am glad, my friend, that you approve of my choice, and I hope to see you at the wedding," said I.

"I shall certainly come, my dear sir," returned Grogstar. "I told Delia—Mrs. Frogsham, I would say—that I should expect an invitation to her next wedding, and she promised that I should have one. Is the day appointed?"

"No, but I shall not feel secure in my happiness until it is. O my dear Grogstar, excuse my emotions, but if you had ever loved as I love, you—"

"I've been there," he interrupted. "I

know just what your feelings are. Give 'em vent. That was all that saved me."

"What! did you ever love a woman?"

"Yes, she was a woman," wailed Grogstar, "and—and she was a widow."

"Did she die?"

"I would be alone," he murmured, laying down his pipe. "I feel it coming; a feeling of sadness and longing." And as he turned his face toward the sea, I am sure I saw a tear glistening in the moonlight as it trickled down his nose.

"The sight of my happiness makes him sad when he thinks of his own sorrows," I said, as I quietly left the room.

The next morning there were two arrivals at the Rocky Beach hotel. One was a Mr. Bluggs, and the other a Mr. Nogglestone, both of New York.

"When I appeared on the piazza, they were both talking with Grogstar. The latter bade me good-morning as I passed.

"Is that he?" asked Bluggs, in a suppressed voice.

"Fortunate man!" exclaimed Nogglestone, when Grogstar replied affirmatively.

Did they refer to me? If so, then my friend must have told them that I was Delia's accepted lover. Perhaps they had seen her, and perhaps they were both charmed with her beauty; and poor fellows! how they must have envied me!

I was thinking of this, my bosom swelling with pride and joy, as I quietly smoked my morning cigar, when my beauteous Delia appeared at the door. Grogstar, Bluggs and Nogglestone raised their hats simultaneously. Delia bowed and smiled, O, so sweetly, and yet so modestly. Ah, she was so happy in my love that she could not look coldly upon any one. Then she came forward and took my arm, and we walked down toward the beach.

"You know them, it seems, my dear?" I questioned.

"What, Mr. Bluggs—Mr. Nogglestone, darling?"

"Yes, sweet."

"O, they were old lovers of mine," replied Delia, with that childlike smile. And then noticing that her answer did not seem to increase my happiness, she added, "But that isn't my fault, Cornelius. I wasn't to blame for their loving me. I didn't ask 'em to. I never asked anybody to love me, and I don't want anybody to love me but you, Cornelius, dear."

"But they can't help it," said I, "you are so beautiful and good. It's a wonder to me that Grogstar never loved you."

"O, he did," cried Delia. "He was my third lover."

"Ha!" I caught her in my arms, as we stood upon the sandy shore, and pressed her to my bosom. "O Delia, if you love me, name the day—quick!" I cried. "'Twould break my heart to lose you; and here you are surrounded by three of your old lovers, who are undoubtedly waiting to snatch you from my arms at the first favorable opportunity. Name the day, darling, and let it be soon. The suspense will be terrible until I can call you really and truly my own. Ah! now too well I know the cause of Grogstar's emotions, which he vainly tried to conceal, when I told him you had promised to be mine. Name the day!"

"Will next Thursday do, Cornelius?" she asked, in her musical voice, while a modest blush suffused her beautiful countenance as she timidly raised her dovelike eyes to my face.

"Yes, Thursday will do. I think I can survive a week," I answered.

"We will be married, here, then, in my little parlor at the hotel."

"Yes."

"And if you have no objections, I should like to have a few friends present."

"I have already invited Grogstar," said I.

"Yes, and I should like to have Mr. Bluggs and Mr. Nogglestone there."

"Do you think they will be able to bear it, my dear? Wont it be too much for their delicate organizations?"

"They will bear up for my sake," said Delia.

"Then let them come," I answered, turning my eyes toward the hotel. But imagine my surprise and alarm to discover Bluggs, Nogglestone and Grogstar, all seated at the latter's window, each man holding a large telescope in his hand, and each telescope being pointed directly at Mrs. Frogsham and myself.

"Delia,"—said I, as the cold perspiration broke out all around my nose—"Delia, we are watched."

"They always do just so," she answered.

"They watched Mr. Frogsham the same way. But they don't mean anything wrong."

"O, they don't, eh? But I wont trust 'em, my dear. They may have formed a conspiracy to tear you from my arms. I

don't like the expression of Nogglestone's eyes, and there is a sinister curl to Bluggs's nose. No, let us return to the hotel immediately. Until we are married I shall not feel secure. I shall hardly dare trust you out of my sight."

Dear reader, I cannot linger over the next few days—the last of my single life. They were too full of anxiety and vague terror that something awful was about to happen. I hardly dared leave Delia alone for a single moment, and I never retired to rest, until satisfied by the snoring of Bluggs, Nogglestone and Grogstar, as I listened at their doors, that they were wrapt in slumber.

But Thursday came at last. Several of my friends from the city came down on the morning train, and with them the Rev. Mr. Alderburg, who was to officiate at the wedding. Quite a number of Delia's friends and relatives came also, so that there was a very pretty little company gathered in Mrs. Frogsham's parlor, when the bride and bridegroom entered the room, and stood up before the clergyman to be joined in the holy bonds of matrimony.

I speak of the bridegroom, you will observe, as if—well, as if he was *another fellow*. This is owing to the fact of my having obtained most of the particulars of the—performance from another person. As for myself, I was in a semi-unconscious state for the greater part of the day. Too much happiness, no matter in what form I take it, is sure to fly to my head; and that was what was the matter with me on my wedding day.

But I was conscious through it all, of the presence of Bluggs, Nogglestone and Grogstar. All through the ceremony, they kept their eyes fixed upon my face. I think they were in a sort of clairvoyant state, for they seemed to take all my feelings upon them; and when Mr. Alderburg pronounced Delia and me one, we four sighed in concert, and looked around us with a smile, or, rather, *four smiles*.

Then came the congratulations, the kissing, the wine, a short ride to the railroad station, the tearful partings, and then, with my beautiful wife by my side, the train dashed on, bearing us away upon our wedding tour.

I don't know as I told the reader that my wife had resided in Langholm previous to our marriage. She owned a fine house

there, and thither were repaired to spend our honeymoon.

Arriving at the house in the evening, I was somewhat surprised upon being ushered into the parlor by my wife, to find the room filled with children, who made a rush for Delia the moment she entered the room.

"Why, dear Cornelius," cried that dearest of women, looking up into my face with some confusion depicted upon her innocent-looking countenance, "I don't know—I think I must have forgotten to tell you anything about my children."

"Your children?"

"Yes, dear."

"How—how many—have you—you got on hand?" I asked in some bewilderment, looking around upon the sea of smiling childish faces.

"Only twelve," Delia answered, modestly.

"Twelve?"

"Yes, four sets, Cornelius," replied that paragon of women, putting up that little rosebud of a mouth for a kiss.

I sank into a chair. "Madam," said I, "you are doubtless aware that I'm fond of children; I dote on 'em, and I appreciate this little surprise you have given me."

"O, I knew you would."

"Yes, I do. Are they all here?"

"Yes, dear."

"You are sure that there are none lying round loose outside?"

"Quite. There are just four sets, and they are all here."

"Sets? I don't know as I understand you. Please explain."

"Why," she began, looking so modest and so charming, "I mean sets of triplets."

Then she sat down upon my knee, and put her beautiful arms around my neck, while the *twelve* grouped themselves into sets in their regular order and with hands

behind them, stood staring at their new father. Then my wife continued thus:

"I married my first husband in Indiana. He is the father of set No 1."

"Ah, indeed! And after he became a father, I suppose he died."

"No, he—he became discouraged and retired. He said that he had heard that there was luck in odd numbers, but he wouldn't believe it. So he left me, and I—I obtained a divorce."

"But Grogstar told me that Mr. Frogsham was dead."

"O, yes, he died. I was speaking of my first. His name was Noggelstone."

"Noggelstone! the gentleman whom you invited to our wedding?"

"Yes, darling. My second was Mr. Bluggs, and he got discouraged, and—and retired."

"Did he become a—a father, too?" I inquired anxiously.

"Yes, Cornelius; set No. 2 belongs to him. I married Mr. Grogstar next, and he is the father of set No. 3.

"And he became discouraged?"

"Yes, and then he retired. I obtained a divorce from Mr. Grogstar, and married Mr. Frogsham."

"He was the father of set No. 4?"

"Yes, darling."

"And he got discouraged?"

"Yes, and died," replied Delia, arising and standing before me in all her loveliness.

For one moment I sat spellbound, gazing first at the *twelve* and then at my beautiful wife. Then I staggered to my feet.

"You are not discouraged, I hope, Cornelius?" said my wife, as she laid her little hand on my arm.

"O no, my dear. On the contrary, I'm quite encouraged. But I never could bear much bliss—and this is—well a—about four sets too much."

THE TELLTALE EYE.

BY A TRAVELLER.

SOME years ago, while living in Paris, I met with a French detective who was boarding for the while at the house at which I was sojourning. I confess I was drawn to the man from the first. He was a frank, open-hearted, careless Frenchman, whose only aim seemed to be to enjoy life. I had no idea that he was a detective, but supposed him to be simply a young man of fortune. Together we attended the various places of amusement, and I soon found my friendship for Eugene Laromie was cordially reciprocated.

He was a tall, splendidly-formed man, with a good-looking careless face, black hair and whiskers. A close observer would have noticed self-reliance and determination in every feature, and the calm clear eyes told of more than ordinary courage. He was quiet and unobtrusive in his manners, and was decidedly a favorite with all in the house.

One morning as Laromie and I were sitting at breakfast, an old gentleman who had been boarding there for some time (he was there before my arrival) came in and seated himself opposite us. Laromie glanced at him carelessly, but I noticed a quiet smile in the corner of his mouth as he did so. I noticed, also that Laromie was longer over his breakfast than usual, and rose only when the old gentleman did. My surprise was soon ended, however; for as the old gentleman turned to leave the dining-room, Laromie approached him, and

laying his hand on his shoulder, said, quietly:

"Monsieur Du Far, you are my prisoner."

The old man turned deadly pale, and glanced around hurriedly, as if to secure some means of escape. But Laromie's grasp on his shoulder tightened, and he continued, coolly:

"Monsieur Du Far, I arrest you in the name of the state, for forgery and counterfeiting."

"Who are you?" faltered the old man.

"Eugene Laromie, one of the secret police of Paris, better known to you as Henri Gaubin."

The old man said not a word, but suffered Laromie to lead him away. I followed in the most complete astonishment. Arriving at the street entrance, we found a cabriolet waiting for some one. Laromie, after telling me that he would see me again during the day and explain the matter, entered the vehicle with his prisoner, and drove off.

I was positively bewildered by what I had seen and heard. Laromie a detective! I could scarcely credit it. I felt not a little uneasy, too. I had been expressing my opinions with regard to the government and condition of affairs, to him without reserve, and many of them were not very complimentary to the "powers that be." I could not help fearing that his duty as a government official might require him to get me into trouble; and I was somewhat im-

dent to see him and have an explanation of the whole matter. I did not meet him again until late in the afternoon.

"Well, *mon ami*," said he, as he entered my room, where I sat smoking, "have you recovered from your surprise? Ha, ha! I don't know which was more amusing, this morning, your astonishment or that of old Du Far. The rascal was completely caught, and I do myself the credit to believe it has been one of the neatest affairs yet performed in Paris."

"Laromie," said I, as I pointed to a chair, which he took, "I am afraid I have been very imprudent since I have known you."

"What do you mean?"

"Not knowing your real character," I answered, "I have been perfectly unreserved in the expression of my opinions with regard to your government, and matters in general here."

"You fear, then, that I may have played the spy on you, and reported your sayings to the head of the Bureau of Police?" he said, hastily, while his face flushed painfully.

"Exactly," I replied.

He rose abruptly from his seat and went towards the door; but in a moment he came back, laughing.

"Knowing your opinions of our system here," he said, good-naturedly, "I don't blame you for the suspicion, especially after what you witnessed this morning. But, believe me, *mon ami*, it is no part of my duty to sacrifice my honor; and being on such intimate terms with you, I should have warned you, had I thought it necessary for you to be cautious. But I am willing for you to hold your opinions, so long as you do not interfere with matters here. You have wronged me greatly, but I forgive you."

I at once offered him my hand, and apologized for my suspicions. He laughed good-naturedly, and assured me that I was forgiven. Then we sealed the forgiveness with a cigar and a bottle of claret.

"Now," said I, "I want you to tell me something of your experience as a detective; for, from what I have seen of you to-day, I think you must be an uncommonly clever fellow. Suppose you give me the history of the case you have just completed."

"They say at headquarters," said Laromie, "that I do my work well, and I believe

the compliment is not undeserved. I give great care to my cases, and am usually employed in those which are considered difficult. But instead of telling you of the case that happened this morning, suppose you let me relate what I consider my most famous exploit."

"By all means. I want to know, also, why you became a detective. Tell me anything you like. I shall be a willing listener."

"I think I must have been born for my profession," said Laromie, brushing the ashes off his cigar; "for in my childhood I was always finding out other persons' secrets. My companions could hide nothing from me, and it seemed to me that events had only to happen for me to know them. Many that I did not seek to learn forced themselves under my very eyes, and frequently to my great annoyance. As I grew up, this talent, for so I consider it, increased. When I came of age, I found myself in possession of an ample fortune which was left me by my late father. There was no necessity for me to adopt any profession, or enter any branch of business, for my support was already guaranteed; but, in order to give my talents room for legitimate use, I determined to enter the secret service of the government. The chief of the secret police was a friend, and I sought him, and asked admission into his force. At first, he advised me strongly against the course I wished to pursue, giving me many reasons which it is useless to mention here. Some of them were good, others of no consequence; but none of them sufficient to alter my determination. I pressed my application with so much earnestness that the chief at last consented to take me on trial for six months. At first, he gave me only trivial cases; but I soon satisfied him that I was capable of better things than these, and he gave me more responsible duties. I succeeded so well in everything, that in less than three months I was promoted to a position of great trust and importance. I have now been in the service nine years, and during that time have made myself valuable to the government; and it has become customary, whenever a case requires unusual talents, to entrust it to me; and I do not remember but one instance in which I have failed to give satisfaction."

"Having told you this, *mon ami*, simply

in compliance with your request, I will now relate what I consider my greatest exploit.

"About fifteen months ago I was summoned by the chief, and informed that a murder had been committed in the Faubourg St. Antoine, attended by an uncommon amount of mystery. He wished me to visit the spot immediately, and take charge of the case, which promised to be an interesting one. I at once repaired to the house. I found it in charge of the authorities, who had refused to allow anything to be disturbed until I had visited the place. I was told that the murder had been committed on the previous night. The victim was an old woman who had amassed a considerable sum of money, which she always kept hidden in her chamber. It was generally known in the neighborhood that she was very miserly, and kept her money by her, being unwilling to trust it out of her sight. Her body was lying on the floor of the chamber, and the room had evidently been plundered by the murderer. The woman's throat was cut through to the spinal column, and though she lay in an immense puddle of blood, there were no stains on her dress, and no blood marks on the floor of the room. This was singular, and at once convinced me that the deed was done by a practised hand. The murderer had evidently held the woman in one position with one hand, while he cut her throat with the other with one powerful sweep of the knife. There was no other clue to the assassin. It was of importance to know that the murderer was not a novice, and, from the manner in which the deed was done, I inclined to the opinion that he was not a Parisian, for the method had never been practised in the city before.

"I returned to the Bureau and informed the chief of the result of my observations, at the same time telling him that I had very little hope of succeeding, the clues to the mystery being so obscure. Nevertheless, I promised to do my best to unravel it. In about three weeks I was sent to examine into another murder. The victim this time was the mistress of a boarding-house, and was a widow somewhat advanced in years. Her chamber had been entered and robbed, and her throat had been cut to the bone, in precisely the same manner as in the other case. She, too, lay

on the floor, weltering in a pool of blood, but nowhere else was a drop of the blood visible, on her person, the floor, or the furniture. Evidently the same man had committed both murders. The only difference in the circumstances of the second affair was that I found on the floor near the body a pocket-handkerchief folded into a three-cornered shape, and showing marks of having been knotted at the ends.

"The thing perplexed me greatly, and I felt quite hopeless of dispelling the mystery which surrounded it. The pocket-handkerchief was of no use to me, as it had belonged to the deceased. Nevertheless, I took it with me, hoping that it might be of use some day. I was very anxious to trace the assassin, for I began to see that he was commencing an organized system of murder; and besides this, I felt that my reputation was at stake.

"While pondering over the matter—and it was rarely out of my thoughts—one of my friends, who is a photographer, communicated to me some intelligence that he had gained from his reading and studies. He had seen it stated that the last impression made upon the eye of a dying person would be retained there for a certain time after death. That being the case, he thought it possible to obtain a photographic likeness of that impression, and was very anxious to try the experiment. The matter interested me at once, and I readily promised to give him an opportunity to test it in the next murder case that came within my observation. I saw plainly that the discovery, if successful, would be of immense importance in tracing murderers, and I had a vague hope that it would enable me to find the man I was seeking, as I was confident that he would repeat his performance before long. A month passed away, and then a third murder occurred. This victim was, like the second, the keeper of a boarding-house, and was killed for her money. She, too, lay weltering in a pool of blood, with her throat cut to the bone, while, as in the other cases, the wound had been inflicted so as to cause no splashing of blood. The handkerchief lay near the corpse, as in the second case, but seemed to have belonged to the assassin this time, instead of being the property of his victim.

"I at once despatched a messenger to my friend the photographer, who soon ar-

rived, bringing with him instruments of great power and delicacy, which he had procured in anticipation of this event. The eyes of the murdered woman were wide open, and we had no difficulty in fixing her face in a proper position. The day being clear and bright, an excellent negative was taken, and when the impression was transferred to the paper, we found it the profile of a man's face. The upper portion was obscure, but the lower part, from the nose down, was perfect. The features were those of an Italian. This confirmed my supposition that a foreigner had committed the murders. Only the lower part of the face being produced, I was somewhat perplexed. It was too bad to be so near the end I sought, and yet to be baffled by an imperfect picture. I was sorry that only the profile was the last thing seen by the dead woman. Had it been the full face, I might have had more to encourage me. Then again, there is something common to all Italians in the lower part of the face, and what resembles one might with reason be said to resemble another in this respect. However, my friend and I were delighted with the result of our experiment. It was a novelty then; now it is a common thing. We decided to say nothing about it until we had made other trials, unless we found it necessary for the development of the case I was engaged upon. I provided myself with a copy of the photograph we had taken, and determined to subject every Italian I met to a rigid inspection. On the whole, the matter was progressing favorably, and although the difficulties in my way were formidable, I could not help feeling encouraged by the events of the day, and I resumed my task with new vigor.

"I at once busied myself with searching for my man among all the Italians that I met. I frequented the places mostly patronized by them—the boulevards, the cafes, the theatre and the opera. Every Italian I met, even down to the organ-grinders, I subjected to a rigid scrutiny, and once or twice came near getting into quarrels with persons who resented my conduct as impertinence. At least two months passed away in this fruitless search, and, in spite of the advantages which I possessed, I began to despair.

"At last, the government having occasion to send me to Switzerland on a secret

mission, I found myself in one of the small towns of that country. Having transacted my business, I set out on my return. In the compartment in which I was placed were four persons. One was an old lady, another a young one, the third a priest, and the fourth a man whose features I could not see, as his hat was drawn down over them. I knew at once, from the man's manner, that he was trying to avoid being recognized, and I determined to watch him.

"After we had gotten fairly underway, and had left the town some twenty miles behind us, the man raised his hat, and I could scarcely repress a scream of delight. There sat the very counterpart of the picture I had in my pocket. I was confident of it from the first, but I knew that it would never do to alarm him at first, and I did not wish to arrest him until I was sure of fastening the charge upon him. Every feature coincided exactly with those of the photograph. Although I felt certain of this, I quietly took out the picture, and compared it with the face before me. The examination satisfied me.

"It was necessary to proceed cautiously. As soon as I had entirely recovered my self-control, I caught the fellow's eye.

"'Monsieur is Swiss?' I said, inquiringly.

"'No,' he replied, with an unmistakably Italian accent, 'not Swiss.'

"'Italian?' I said.

"'Yes.'

"'Monsieur is going to Paris?'

"'Yes. Are you?'

"'No. I shall leave the cars at Dijon. Has monsieur ever visited Paris?'

"'Yes, frequently. I was there several months ago.'

"'Ah, then you heard of the terrible murders that took place in the city during your visit?'

"The man started slightly, and looked at me searchingly. I could scarcely repress a smile, but I kept my countenance motionless.

"'What murders?' he asked, hurriedly.

"I narrated the incidents of the three murders with apparent carelessness, but all the while watched him calmly. He was nervous, and, as you Americans say, 'fidgety.' Everything thus far confirmed my suspicions. I was confident that I had my man, but I determined to try him a little

further. Since the last murder I had carried with me, together with the photograph, the handkerchief that I had found near the body of the third victim, and which I supposed had belonged to the assassin. Now I drew it out quietly, and, while pretending to use it, displayed it in such a way that the man could not help noticing it. As his eyes rested upon it his face grew perfectly livid. He glanced at me with a look of terror, but then by a powerful effort regained his self-control, and turned to look out of the window. In a few minutes he turned to me again.

"'Monsieur,' said he, 'that is a singular handkerchief you have. Will you let me see it?'

"I handed it to him, and he gazed at it searchingly. I saw his lips close rigidly. After a searching examination he handed it back to me.

"'There is a singular history connected with that handkerchief,' said I. 'The last of the victims of whom I have told you was a distant connection of mine, and I was the first one to discover the murder. I saw this handkerchief lying on the floor near the body. It was folded into a three-cornered shape, and had the appearance of having been knotted. I supposed it had been used in the assassination; but as it was not injured, and as I took a fancy to it, I took possession of it before the officials came. Do you know I have always had an impression that the murderer was, begging your pardon, an Italian?'

"'An Italian?' cried the man, suddenly, showing signs of great excitement. 'Why do you think so?'

"'From the manner in which the throat was cut. I have heard that your countrymen are deucedly clever with the knife in matters of this sort. But it's an ugly, unpleasant subject. Suppose we drop it?'

"'Willingly,' said the Italian.

"With that our conversation ceased. During the remainder of the ride, as I sat silent, with my hat drawn over my eyes, feigning sleep, I watched the Italian closely. He never took his eyes off from me, and I noticed that he glared at me with a look that was not indicative of a very warm friendship. As the train entered the town of Dijon, I quietly prepared my revolver (with which I am always provided when on duty) for use.

"'By the way,' said I, taking the photo-

graph from my coat pocket, 'I forgot to tell you of a new discovery which was made in connection with the last murder of which we have spoken. It has been found that the eye of a dead person retains for a certain time the last impression made upon it. This being made known to us, we determined to try it with the hope of discovering the murderer of my relative. We procured an artist, who made an excellent photograph of the eye of the murdered woman. To our delight the features of the assassin were revealed distinctly. Here is the picture, if you would like to see it.'

"The train stopped at the depot, and the guard appeared at the door as I handed the photograph to the man. He glanced at it for a moment, and then with a yell sprang to his feet, and moved towards the door. I had anticipated him, and as he turned he saw me standing at the door, covering him with my revolver.

"'One step more, and I will fire,' I said. 'In the name of the law, I arrest you upon three distinct charges of murder.'

"In a few minutes I had him handcuffed. I did not get out at Dijon, but kept on to Paris with my prisoner. On the way he confessed everything; and indeed, on searching him, I found a memorandum book with a calendar. Opposite the date of each murder there was a black cross, and other dates had a slight mark, with the names of women, and the words, 'without husbands.' These, he told me, were murders which he meant to have committed. I also found in a private pocket of his coat a large, pointed, sharp double-edged knife in a paper sheath. The picture which I had shown him had completely cowed him, and had induced him to confess everything to me.

"Well, he was tried, convicted and beheaded, and I was complimented by the chief for the way in which I had conducted the case. I really do think it was done handsomely, if you will allow me to say so."

I thanked Laromieu for his story, and we talked for a long time about criminal affairs in France. He promised, now that I knew his true character, to take me with him in some of his rounds, and show me the wonders and mysteries of Paris. I frequently availed myself of this kind offer, and some of these days, when I have leisure, may be tempted to relate my experience for the benefit of my readers.

THE THREE FORTUNES.

BY MARY HELEN BOODEY.

THREE young girls sat together at the close of a summer day, each one occupied for the moment with her "own sweet thoughts." Sitting thus, with idle hands and silent lips—albeit the silence was something quite unusual for two pairs of the latter, at least—I will describe them. Very unlike each other they were, yet all the firmest of friends.

First, and tallest, and oldest, was Ada Monckton, a slender blonde, whose delicate cheek wore a soft flush like the heart of a blush rose; not regularly beautiful, and perhaps a trifle too cool, seemingly, there was yet a charm in her deep blue eyes and soft voice that few could entirely resist. Her rather thin clear-cut lips were vividly scarlet, and whether they wore a sweet smile, or curled with ridicule, the expression was equally noticeable. Her hair, of the real yellow hue, was arranged in the height of fashion, with a mass of soft waves above her forehead. As she sat in a low easy-chair, with her long shapely hands crossed in her lap, she was evidently dreaming a daydream, for a pleased smile dimpled her cheeks, and a lovely light softened her bright eyes. Although her early years were spent in the midst of luxury, she was at this time an orphan, without fortune, and a governess in a wealthy family who had known her in prosperity, and with whom she was treated as an equal more than as a dependant.

The second member of the trio, Minna Chester, was a gay bewitching little brunette, with hair of the proverbial "raven's wing," and eyes decidedly black, which could flash in anger or sparkle with mirth. Her features were perfect, her form was very small, and her ways were birdlike for their quickness. She sat by the window, tapping the sill with her plump taper fingers, and watching the flight of a humming-bird among the flowers in the garden below. Evidently she was not of the thoughtful order, and would not remain quiet and silent long.

At another window, with one fair cheek resting in a pink-palmed hand, sat the third and youngest of the party. Marian Warner

united in her face some characteristics of both blonde and brunette, for her long curling hair was of the lightest golden brown, while her large eyes were dark as those of famous Italian beauties, and, with their almost equally dark lashes and brows, formed a striking contrast to her pure pale complexion and light hair. Unlike her companions, no rosy flush mantled on her cheek, and her face was colorless except for the scarlet of her full beautiful lips; yet it was not the pallor of ill health, and in hours of excitement she could boast a bloom as bright as it was rare. The loose sleeves of her dress, of some thin black texture, falling back, revealed round white arms, and her hands were in keeping with the rest of her dainty *personelle*. Jewels flashed on her fingers, throat and wrists, but a single half-opened rose nestled among her bright curls, and its companion was tucked into her belt. Marian Warner was twenty-one; a beauty and an heiress; deeply loved by some few friends, regarded with indifference by many (aside from her suitors), and something of a puzzle to all with whom she associated. Extremely reserved except with the "chosen few," Marian might have been considered unfeeling and emotionless, had not her eloquent countenance, often betrayed the interest and animation she did not choose to express in words. But no one could look into those wonderful dark eyes, changing with every feeling, now sparkling with mirth, now glowing with earnest thought, or softening to tenderness, without realizing that her nature was both deep and passionate. She could not conceal the sensitive quiver of her lips, or the rich color that would often rise to her cheeks, and light up her glorious eyes till her beauty seemed almost too great for reality. Such was the girl who sat looking out upon the cloudless summer sky, while she sang the words of an old song half unconsciously. Suddenly she changed the tune and words, and sang in her rich full tones:

"There is a future! O, thank God!
Of life this is so small a part,

"Tis dust to dust beneath the sod,
But there, *up there*, 'tis heart to heart!"

"Do you believe it?" she asked, all her dreaminess gone, turning to her two friends, of whom Minna, as might have been expected, was the first to answer.

"Believe what? How you do burst in upon one's meditations!" returned the lively girl.

Ada merely looked the same question.

"The idea of 'Lorena' that I just sang, that if we are separated on earth we shall meet and know each other in heaven. I'd give a great deal to know that it is true."

"Why, I never thought," replied Minna, wonderingly. "None of my friends ever died—at least no very dear ones—and so I suppose I haven't cared much—"

"I don't believe it," said Ada, in her decided way. "It seems to me that we shall be all alike, one just as dear as another, in heaven. We shall be so perfect that we shall be above earthly affections."

"Could we ever be above loving and being loved, I wonder?" said Marian, thoughtfully. "When I am the best I am the most affectionate, and I can't imagine myself not caring for those few whom I do really love. No, Ada, I shall not agree with you, and will take the idea of the song in full faith. It is a beautiful and comforting thought."

"What a solemn discussion!" cried Minna. "You are trying to pry into the future too much. Why don't you confine yourselves to this world, and ask to have your fortunes told? Don't look as though I am the most irreverent child in existence, Ada, and I'll gratify you with a peep into futurity, if you only have faith enough to believe in it."

"What do you mean?" asked Ada, in some astonishment, accustomed as she was to Minna's freaks!

"Just what I say. I will tell our fortunes." And she took up a small book that lay on the table. It was a little annual devoted to flowers and their language. Each page contained the name of a flower, its language, and a stanza or stanzas descriptive of it. "Now give me a sheet of paper—or I'll help myself," taking it from Marian's writing-desk.

Seating herself, Minna commenced to make figures on the white surface, from one to the entire number of pages that

the book contained. Then turning it over, so that only the blank side was visible, she explained:

"Now, you see, you are to take a pin and prick without looking, and the number you get will direct to a corresponding page and sentiment, from which you can judge what your character or fortune will be. You try first, Ada." And she extended the paper to her more dignified friend.

"What a funny girl you are, Minna!" said Ada. "I don't believe in telling fortunes, but for once I'll gratify you." And she laughingly pierced the paper. On turning it over the number of the page proved to be the one devoted to the dahlia, signifying "elegance and dignity."

"Just the one for you, *ma chérie*," said Minna, as she read the lines:

*"It is worth much in this dull world of strife
And foolish vanity, to meet a heart
Serene and beautiful like thine!
Thy form hath elegance that indicates
The beautiful refinement of thy thoughts;
And there is dignity in thy firm step,
That speaks a soul superior to the thrall
Of petty vanity and lowborn pride."*

"Nothing could be better. Now, Marian."

Marian indolently took the paper held out to her, and pricking it, handed it back to Minna, who cried out:

"O you naughty girl! couldn't you find a better one than that? Thirty-five—'A heart left to desolation.' How pathetic!" And in a melo-dramatic tone she read:

*"The long lone Future! It hath no gay dream,
For naught can make it beautiful but thee;
Hope plants no garlands by life's shadowy stream,
Nor are there blossoms on life's frost-hued tree.
And Fame, she may bring wreaths; I heed them
not;
By all the world I pray to be forgot."*

Marian's lip curled as she replied:

"If I were not so very heart-whole, it might touch me." And yet her eyes grew sad, as though she felt a presentiment that such a wall might come from her lips some day.

"Now for my own humble self, hoping somebody is dying to get me, and this will be an expression of his romantic attachment. I don't see why I shouldn't be gratified with a little sentiment, as well as you two angelic creatures."

Ada looked at Minna's number—the flower was "Corn," its language "Riches,"

"If thou't be mine, bright gems shall deck
Thy snowy arms and breast,
And pearls shall cluster round thy neck,
And on thy forehead rest."

"O, how delightful!" exclaimed Minna.
"I shouldn't have the least objection to
all these beautiful possessions. Don't be
envious, girls," she added, graciously.
"I shall remember you in my prosperity,
you may be sure."

"Thanks," returned Ada, with mock
humility. "We appreciate your kindness,
I assure you, and look forward with impa-
tience to the reflected glory that will be
ours as friends of yours. You will per-
haps then appreciate my 'elegance and
dignity,' and together we'll try to bind up
Marian's broken heart. Poor Marian!"
she laughed, turning to the object of her
commiseration, "how melancholy she
looks already!"

Marian's eyes flashed with more feeling
than the subject seemed to demand, and
she began, without speaking, to write rap-
idly on a scrap of a paper. Silence reigned
for a moment, and then Marian, with
flushed cheeks, said, "Here is my answer:

"Away with your omens, their voice is untrue,
And why should one always be forced to be blue?
Here is life's glowing chalice pressed close to my
lip,
And in trembling and dread must I constantly slip?
No! my heart shall not yield to a fate so unkind
While the roses of Friendship for me are en-
twined."

The astonishment that at first rendered
her two listeners speechless, broke forth in
exclamations. It was not wholly that
Marian had answered in rhyme, when they
were unaware that she had ever written in
verse, but they both felt that there was an
undercurrent of deep feeling apparently
uncalled for by so trivial a subject.

"Marian! Marian! you never told us
you could write poetry!" they both cried
in a breath. "You witch! you can do
anything."

"I never dignified it by the name of
poetry," smiled Marian, her composure and
cheerfulness at once restored, as she tore
the small MS. into bits which she scattered
down from the window. "Come, girls,
what do you say to a ride down to the
lake? It is just cool enough to be pleas-
ant, and Bess can be brought around in a
few minutes."

"Ah, delightful!" exclaimed Minna,

clapping her hands, while the less demon-
strative Ada smiled her pleasure at the
proposition. "And let us visit the garden
while we are waiting."

Accordingly the three descended to the
garden, which was bright with all the
blossoms of summer, and the sound of their
happy young voices and soft laughter float-
ed on the air, reaching the ear of a stran-
ger who was leisurely riding past the
grounds. He glanced with a languid sort
of curiosity in the direction of the voices,
and saw what he mentally characterized as
the Three Graces. Minna, in her careless
glee, had caught her thin dress in the
thorns of a large rosebush, and in comic
dismay called to her companions to come
to the rescue. So she stood with rosy
cheeks and laughing eyes, while Marian
and Ada hastened up the path, arm in
arm, unaware of the spectator, whose ad-
miring glance grew brighter as it rested
on Marian.

There is a singular power in the gaze of
the human eye, and Marian, unconscious
of an observer, yet involuntarily raised her
eyes, to meet so intent a look that her own
lids drooped quickly in momentary confu-
sion. When she looked up again she only
saw the figure of the traveller receding in
the distance.

"Why, what is the matter, Marian?"
asked Minna, in an injured tone. "Very
kind of you, I am sure, to stand there and
leave me to the mercy of this merciless
thornbush. See, my poor dress will be
likely to be torn in a hundred pieces. I
was chasing the loveliest great butterfly
you ever saw, and didn't mind where he
led me, the deceitful creature!"

But Marian was by this time busily en-
gaged in disentangling Minna from her
thorny neighbor, with a heightened color
and trembling fingers. Just as the two
girls had succeeded in releasing Minna, un-
injured in dress or person, the carriage
was driven to the door, and soon the three
young ladies were enjoying all the pleas-
ure of a ride through scenes of country
beauty.

The air was soft, the sky was fair,
And summer smiled so sweetly there
That earth seemed really paradise
To youthful hearts and youthful eyes.
The squirrel sprang along the wall,
They heard the merry blackbird's call—
A bobolink had many a trill,
To show his operatic skill.

They heard the murmur of a stream,
 And saw its rippling surface gleam
 Where sunbeams changed it into gold—
 Those glorious alchemists of old!
 The wild flowers blossomed fair and free,
 But loveliest were flowers three,
 That, strange to say, could speak and smile,
 And practise many a pretty wile.

One was a lily, tall and fair,
 And one a rich carnation glowed;
 But where in all the earth or air
 Were charms like Marian's bestowed?
 Her lips were like two rosebuds full,
 Her eyes were wells of starry light,
 And on her cheeks might fancy cull
 The roses red, the roses white.

'Twas not the form whose perfect grace
 Made "motion only harmony;"
 'Twas not the sweetly witching face
 With features very fair to see:
 Her soft low voice in sweetness rang,
 A pleasure to the listening ear,
 As if the silvery accents sang
 Of love most sweet, and hope most dear.

The ride was delightful, so all the girls averred, as they came slowly home in the soft summer twilight. Marian was to drive her two visitors to their homes, which were situated further on, and so they drove past her own door, and Ada and Minna were each deposited safely at their respective abodes, with the usual amount of girlish leave-taking, which was viewed with rueful visage by Minna's tall dark-eyed brother, who looked as if he would willingly have appropriated some of it to himself, as the dewy lips of Minna and Marian met affectionately. Declining all invitations to enter the house, and accept of an escort home later in the evening, Marian drove away at a brisk pace, while handsome Dick Chester leaned carelessly against the open gate, and watched her out of sight.

It was not every one who would have treated Mr. Richard Chester with as much careless coolness as he received at Marian Warner's hands, and not from any one else would he have borne it so patiently. But "Queen Marian," as he often called her to himself, had reigned over his heart for a long time, and he knew it. Perhaps she knew it, too; the probabilities are that she did, but if so, she was not an over-gracious monarch, being decidedly chary of her smiles. Yet Dick was not without hope, for if she was somewhat cool to him, she was frigid to his rivals, of whom there were many, caught by the glitter of the lady's wealth, by her singular beauty, and by the sweetness of character which showed itself,

spite of repression, in a thousand unconscious ways.

Therefore, as he slowly sauntered up the walk to the veranda that June eve, he stroked his silken brown mustachios with as composed an air as usual, and was as ready as ever to amuse himself at Minna's expense, in a superlatively good-humored way, which rendered him all the more provoking. It was so easy to ruffle pretty Minna's temper, that he found it an irresistible temptation, like most brothers.

"So, Minna," said he, as he went up the steps, to find his sister seated on the veranda, with a pet kitten in her lap, "you have been separated from your darling Pinknose all day long! How could you endure it? Did Marian have a Pinknose with which to console your aching heart during the long hours of separation?"

"O," returned Minna, with a defiant curl of the lip, "don't you trouble yourself, sir. We had more important subjects to think of than kittens!"

"O! ah! Really? Is it possible that you ventured to decide in so short a time whether to wear your hair in high braids or low curls? Rash girl! beware of the impetuosity of youth!"

"Now, Dick, you are trying to provoke me, but you can't, you know," retorted Minna, with a suspicious sparkle in her bright eyes, nevertheless, for she always resented her brother's favorite insinuation that she never thought of anything deeper than fashion. "I can see that you are dying to find out how we spent the day, but I shall not tell you. One thing I'll say, I've found out something about Marian Warner that I never suspected before, and you couldn't guess what it is if you were to guess all night."

Minna was quick-sighted enough to understand that anything in reference to Marian roused Dick's interest, well that interest as he might beneath assumed indifference; and now, sure of having dealt a telling shot, she rose, as if to go into the house, gently placing the kitten on the veranda floor. But this did not accord with Mr. Dick Chester's wishes, and he caught up the unoffending kitten with so rude a touch that a plaintive mew made Minna rush to the rescue.

"You unfeeling creature! Give him back to me!"

"O, Pinknose is well enough," serenely

returned Dick, holding the unfortunate pet, that evidently thought its last days had come, dangling in the air, just beyond Minna's reach. "See what an expressive countenance he has, and I'm sure his voice is improving. He'll be equal to giving us a serenade soon."

"Serenade! he'll die; you'll choke him to death. Now, *dear Dick*, put him down, there's a good boy, and I'll tell you something nice—about Marian, too."

"O, just as you choose," said Dick, coolly, tossing the kitten toward her. "I don't want Pinknose any more—he isn't amusing—not half so amusing as you are, Minna," he added, half caressingly, half teasingly, as he twisted one of her curls the wrong way.

"Thank you for the compliment. I am surprised that your lordship should esteem me higher than a cat," said Minna, in high disdain; but meeting Dick's comically beseeching look as he said, "There, Minna, I'll never attempt to flatter you again," she burst into a merry laugh, in which he joined.

Then followed an animated account of the manner in which she had spent the day, including her "fortune-telling;" and she related with *empressment* how Marian had answered her "fortune" in verse.

"Now, did you ever once suppose that Marian could write poetry, Dick?"

"Well," said Dick, who bore the disclosure with provoking calmness, "I should have thought she could if she tried."

"O, it's all very well for you to pretend that, but I tell you that she felt what she wrote, and it's my opinion that Marian Warner has had some love affair, cold as she always seems to be in that respect. You know she was a year in Europe, and who knows but she lost her heart there to some fascinating foreigner? O, don't I wish she would tell me all about it!"

"I dare say," said Dick, sarcastically; "and if your supposition were true, you might wish so till you were gray, for Marian isn't one of those girls who tell all they know, and a great deal more."

"Well, we'll see," ejaculated Minna, rising to go into the house, conscious that she had said something to tease Dick, and half glad, half sorry.

Dick consoled himself for his sister's absence with a cigar, though it did not have a very soothing effect, to judge from

his clouded face; and as he at last rose and stood looking down the walk, a moment before going in, he muttered to himself, "I wonder if Min is right!"

Ada Monckton sat long by her window, overlooking a rose-laden garden, that night, and her thoughts were not pleasant ones, to judge from the frown that occasionally knit her fair brows, and the stern pressure of her lips, as if she would repress some too vehement exclamation. The moonlight, shining down upon her face, gave it a ghostly whiteness; and in those fiery eyes and passion-convulsed features one would hardly have recognized the calm and stately girl who never did an *outré* thing, and who was supposed to have no very passionate feelings. One sentence alone escaped her lips as she turned from the outside loveliness. It was this:

"And he thinks only of her!"

Marian Warner dreamed strange dreams that night, of ice-capped mountains towering to the sky, of mountain torrents and Alpine precipices, varied by rare views of Roman palaces and the sunlit bay of Naples. She saw herself standing on the brink of a precipice, dizzy, and ready to fall, when a strong arm drew her away, and she sank back unconscious, to awake with a stranger's face bending over her, and to find herself supported by the same strong arm that had been her salvation. A mellow voice said, in accents of emotion:

"*Grace a Dieu! je n'étais pas trop tard.*"

She awoke with that voice still ringing in her ears, and saw the morning sunshine peering through the closed blinds, smelled the perfume of roses on the air, and heard the jubilant songs of birds. Involuntarily she rubbed her eyes, as if to convince herself that she had been dreaming, and as the memory of her vision returned, a smile like veritable sunshine lit up her face, to be succeeded by an expression of sadness and doubt.

The summer months passed away with their train of incidents, and I cannot better tell those which had an influence on the fortunes of Ada, Marian and Minna than by quoting from Ada's journal, kept with her usual exactness. The first entry to be given is dated a week from the day whose events have already been described.

June 24.—Went to the picnic yesterday

at London Grove with the family. The day was delightful, just warm enough, and the party large. Marian was there, looking as bewitching as usual, and equally, as usual, surrounded by her masculine admirers. Richard Chester seemed to be the favorite, if such a name can be given to one who is merely the recipient of ordinary civility. To the others she did not trouble herself to attend beyond the requirements of common politeness. "Dick," as she calls him, is evidently her slave. What is that girl's charm? I know she is beautiful, but so are others, and she is rather grave than gay. Sometimes I think her coldness and hauteur only make her more captivating in the eyes of men, but still it would not be so with another. Minna says she is a witch.

By the way, Minna was there, and came up to me leaning on the arm of a fine-looking gentleman, whom she introduced as Mr. Standish, of New York; and I heard from others that he is a millionaire. He seemed quite smitten with little Min's bright saucy ways, and monopolized her all he could.

As for me, what matters it? Am I not a poor governess, only admitted to society through the good-nature of my friends? Yet once Ada Monckton's smile was esteemed as highly as that of many another. I was not happy yesterday—why should I be? But no one knew it except myself, for my face does not often betray me. I was not slighted—O no! even the governess has her admirers, and young Harry Reynolds was only too happy to devote himself to me. When we happened to be alone a few minutes, I had all I could do to keep him from proposing on the spot. Bah! what do I want of a boy like that? Yet he is convenient sometimes, and it pleases me mightily to see his purse-proud mother and sisters wince at his open preference and attention. It is as good as a play to see their frantic endeavors to keep him away from me, when at one glance of mine he is at my side. However, if they did but know it, they are safe, for I do not want the poor little fellow. Yet I do believe he loves me truly, and there are few that do. Why can't I return his liking, and not be reaching out for what another scorns to take? Shame on you, Ada Monckton!

July 30.—Have spent the day with Mar-

ian. She is going to give a party next week, and of course I am invited to go and witness her triumphs. If she were not so kind, I'm afraid I should hate her. She stabbed me unconsciously to-day. "Be sure to dress and look your prettiest," said she, "for Dick Chester will be there, and, do you know, I have set my heart on making you like him and he you? You are well suited to each other every way. Now don't smile that incredulous smile of yours, Ada, for you have only to thoroughly know Dick to be conscious of his worth."

"Humph!" said I, "begging your pardon, I think Mr. Richard Chester would prefer making his own choice, and so would I. If I am not very much mistaken, he has long ago selected his divinity."

"No," said she, earnestly; "he may think he has, but it is only fancy."

"O wise among women!" said I, laughing; "how marvellously well you read a young man's heart. Can you read your own with the same wonderful skill? You may think that your own heart is free, but it is all fancy."

To my surprise, she blushed deeply, and turned away to hide her momentary embarrassment. She is a singular girl, and I cannot fathom her motives; for if she loves Chester herself, why does she not accept him? And, stranger still, why does she suggest him to me? Here is a mystery, and to its development I devote myself, for I consider that I have quite a genius for discovery.

August 8.—Marian's party was quite a brilliant affair. All the beauty and fashion, etc., etc., were there from miles around, but the beautiful young hostess was undisputably the reigning star, and really, viewing her with an unprejudiced eye, I could not wonder that masculine hearts were not proof against her many charms. An unwonted color tinged her cheeks, her great dark eyes shone with a splendor I have rarely seen rivalled, and the pensive air habitual to her now and then gave place to an archness which was perfectly bewitching. Her dress was in her usual exquisite taste, of pure filmy white, with clusters of Alpine violets for ornament. She has a wonderful fondness for those flowers.

Richard Chester came and stood by my side, and we exchanged a few common-places; but his eyes followed Marian with

a world of admiring love in them. I trust that my smile was all the sweeter for the bitterness in my heart as I said:

"Our friend Marian is very bewitching to-night."

"Yes," was the reply vouchsafed, with another glance at his divinity, who stood the centre of an animated group.

"It might seem strange to an uninitiated observer," I continued, led by an unaccountable impulse, "that our fair Marian has not long before this given her hand to some one of her admirers; but Marian does not show her heart, except to a very few."

"You speak enigmas," he returned, with an uneasy smile. "What explanation can there be, except that she is as yet 'heart-whole and fancy free?'"

"O, I meant nothing," I replied; "I only alluded to the rumor that Marian lost her heart while she was abroad, and, after all, I dare say it was only a flying bit of gossip without the least foundation. I ought not to have mentioned it, and should not if I had not supposed it had reached your ears. I meant no harm, and only thought it an easy explanation of Marian's general coldness and indifference."

"As you say," he returned, gravely, "it would be a satisfactory explanation, if true. You need not regret having mentioned it, for I shall not repeat it."

At this moment Harry Reynolds came up to claim my hand for the next dance, and Richard Chester was soon talking gayly with a lively girl from the South who is visiting the Homers.

The night was very warm, and I felt tired and *distract*; so after a while I dismissed Harry and strolled into the conservatory alone. Near the entrance was a great mirror which reflected the beautiful scene and repeated the loveliness of the place. I stood for a moment looking steadily at my own reflection, and saw a tall and graceful figure enveloped in azure drapery, and surmounted by a face which seemed to me—and I am not vain—at least attractive. But the eyes were scornful; the mouth was hard and drawn. "This," I said to myself bitterly, "is proud Ada Monckton, who has condescended to love where she is not loved, who has given her heart to a man who does not even see it as it lies at his feet, but unconsciously treads upon it, unmindful of its anguish?"

I clenched my hands while my own

eyes returned to me my self-contempt. Just then, as if to reprove me for my fierce feelings, a soft white arm was thrown caressingly over my shoulders—a radiant young face appeared close to mine—and a sweet soft voice said laughingly in my ear—"What, Ada, dear, are you grown so vain that you stand entranced by your own lovely image? I shall call you Narcissa. But I never did see you look as well as you do to-night, and I want you to give us your presence, you naughty girl! Mr. Richard Chester is standing, looking on with the most dissatisfied countenance, and I am persuaded that it is because you have not treated him well;" and Marian shook her head at me reprovingly.

Her caresses stung me.

"Never speak of Richard Chester to me again!" I exclaimed, with an outburst of passion that must have seemed strange, as I turned abruptly and rejoined the company.

During the rest of my stay I was gayer than usual, and smiled so brightly upon Harry that the foolish fellow was in the seventh heaven of delight. What if he does suffer by-and-by, do I not suffer, too?

Minna was bright and pretty as ever, and evidently had a devoted admirer in the millionaire Mr. Standish, and both parties seemed equally pleased. At last I gladly said good-night to Marian and her *chaperone* aunt Mrs. Gilverstone. So passed the party, but I am no less determined than before to fathom Marian's mystery, for mystery I am convinced there is.

Sept. 30.—The days since I last wrote in these pages have passed as days usually pass in the country, and my pupils have been neither more nor less troublesome than customary. I saw Marian yesterday, and she told me that she and her aunt and the Chesters will all go to town some time next month. As we are all going soon we shall meet them there, as usual, for the winter gayeties, in which I shall not, of course, engage much, being not an heiress, but a governess. Still, some few crumbs will probably fall to my share through the good-nature of those who do not forget that I was once a rich man's daughter.

Oct. 10.—The din of the city is around me again. My two little charges, Rose and Florence, have gone to the theatre with Mrs. Cumberly, so, my time is my own. Minna Chester has just left me to digest the

scraps of fashionable gossip she regaled me with. Marian is in the city, she says, and she declares that her brother Dick is growing utterly unlike himself; and pretty Minna shook her head with a comical attempt at melancholy, as she told of his moodiness and singularity. She says she once thought he cared for Marian, but that he now avoids her, and, indeed, all society, and rails at womankind generally. Minna herself is fairly brimming over with animation and high spirits, and showed me, with a very becoming blush and sparkle, a great diamond on her first finger—the engagement ring from Mr. Standish. She says she is happy, and that her betrothed is a model of devotedness and generosity.

Among other items Minna told me that there is great interest in fashionable circles in regard to a certain French count who is rich, handsome and single. Consequently, there is quite a flutter of excitement among managing -mamas and marriageable daughters, regarding the advent into American society of *Monsieur le Comte De Longueville*, who is so evidently, in vulgar parlance, a "great catch." I have been amused by all this sprightly talk of Minna's, though there remains the old pang which it humbles me to feel. Richard Chester grows misanthropic because Marian Warner is beyond his reach. Is there, then, no other woman in the world but one? Fool that I am to ask the question, when my own heart sets me so bad an example! But I have struggled and do struggle against it, and I have for my one sweet morsel of consolation—"No one knows"—and to a proud spirit like mine that is much. I have fought with my own worst impulses; I have called to mind Marian's goodness, her unfailing kindness, her generous friendship which has outlived poverty and obscurity; and I have exorcised the fierce spirit of envy and jealousy that once wrung my heart. I have learned in the conflict that the pangs of unrequited love are easier to bear than the painful tumult of an angry and revengeful spirit. Let life wear what aspect it may for me, I will endeavor to keep my soul *sans peur et sans reproche*. I hear the gay voices of Florence and Rose, and will write no more to-day.

Nov. 2.—Marian came in a few minutes this morning to ask me to drive with her. My time not being especially occupied, I assented, as Mrs. Cumberly had taken her

two little girls out in her own carriage. The spirited greys sprang forward at a pace which exhilarated me. The day has been unusually warm and beautiful, even for an Indian summer day, and Central Park was gay with an ever-moving throng.

We avoided the most crowded avenues, and rolled along in the luxurious carriage, enjoying the scene to the utmost. We often saw mutual acquaintances, and as often Marian bowed to some one I did not know. Among the latter class I noticed a slender dark-eyed man of perhaps thirty, who had an unmistakably foreign air, and whose bow had more grace in it than is generally attained to by our own countrymen. I noticed his look of deferential admiration and the rising color on Marian's cheeks, and inquired:

"Who is that foreign-looking gentleman, Marian?"

"That is Count De Longueville," she replied, "the chief society lion at present. What do you think of him?"

"I cannot say with so brief a glance at him. I think, however, that he is an admirer of my friend Marian," I returned, laughingly.

"Did you have a chance to notice his eyes?" she asked, without paying any attention to my last suggestion. "It seems to me that they have a singular power, and when he fixes them on me, I feel as I should think a bird might feel when a snake is charming it. And yet I have only met him a few times. When I do meet him his attention is more noticed by me than by any one else, I believe, on account of that indescribable feeling. Ada," she said with a little shiver, "do you believe that one person's will can ever be allowed to conquer another's if such control is struggled against?"

"My dear Marian!" I exclaimed, in thorough astonishment, for she spoke with a vehemence as unusual as it was impressive, "what strange ideas! and from you, who are so cool and calm generally?"

"I know it," she returned, with a faint smile; "you cannot understand it any more than any one else would, but I preferred to speak of it to you, rather than any other of my friends. Minna is too flighty, and Aunt Gilverstone too practical. It distresses me," she added, looking at me with an expression of real affright in her large dark eyes. "It may seem foolish, utterly

irrational, to you, but that man's eyes seem to haunt me, and I dread to go into society for fear I shall meet him. It makes no difference whether he is talking to me or stands at the furthest end of the room, I seem to do everything as if in a spell, and at times it seems as if he actually commands me to approach him, and in spite of myself I make some excuse and go toward him. Judge how mortifying this is to me, when those around me may say that I try to attract his attention. As I said before, I have not met him many times when obliged to converse with him, but he seems to be everywhere present, and as you see, I could not ride out this morning, even, without encountering him. He frequents all places of public amusement or private entertainment, being so much sought after on account of his title and wealth, and what they call *his handsome person*; and Aunt Gilverstone is already surprised by my reluctance to go to places which were once my delight. I can't tell her the real reason, for she would consider me crazy, and she has even gone so far as to tell me that she should be glad to see me a countess; to which I retorted with so much temper that she subsided in tears behind her handkerchief, while I begged her pardon and commanded her never to mention the subject to me again, all in the same breath. I was very near another ebullition when she said:

"Well, of course you will do as you please, Marian, but I'm sure you don't seem to *avoid* the count when you are in his society;" but I stifled my anger, and left the room. The worst of it was, Ada, that what she said was apparently true, though much against my will. I am all the time afraid that this strange influence may go still further, and that I may commit myself yet more unmistakably. What can I do?"

I sat speechless during this strange confession, and as I noted Marian's earnestness, I could not doubt her entire sincerity; but I thought that her imagination had run away with her reason, so I answered:

"It is very singular that you should have such an impression. If the count wishes to win your preference, why doesn't he openly show it, instead of exercising this power of his, which makes me think of stories I have read about mesmerists? Are you sure you do not fancy things different from what they are? It does not seem

credible that any gentleman would use such power, if he had it, to annoy a lady."

"As for my fancy, Ada," said she, earnestly, "I assure you that I do not *imagine* anything, for I should never have thought of such a thing if I had not been compelled to do so by my feelings; and the count knows, if he understands me, that any attentions of his beyond mere conventionalities would be quickly rejected, if I should have my own will. It is true no gentleman would exercise such a hateful power, and if he were a king I would say the same. I see you do not know what to say or think, but I am determined to resist always. I have thought my will tolerably strong, and when you are by my side I feel as if I could repel anything, and I am sure my confidence is safe with you."

"Certainly," I replied, "and you must not be influenced too much by all this. If the count is a second Mesmer, he will never be allowed to gain undue control over you so long as you are brave and strong, believe me."

This seemed to encourage her somewhat, and during the rest of the drive she conversed cheerfully on different subjects. Since I came home I have found it impossible to banish thoughts of this fancy of Marian's—for I can call it nothing else—from my mind. If it were any other girl I should wonder less, but Marian—so calm, so self-possessed, so little a novice in society! The whole idea seems so absurd that I am fearful almost for her sanity.

Dec. 5.—Mrs. Cumberly held a reception last evening, and insisted upon my going into the drawing-room, as she said there would be some people there whom it would interest me to see; so I found a quiet corner and ensconced myself therein to see rather than to be seen. Marian was among the earliest arrivals, and came in with a bright smile, and in unusually high spirits, I thought. Not long after Count De Longueville was ushered in, and my interest in the scene and actors began to deepen, for I thought here was an opportunity to see for myself whether he really exercised any power over Marian or not. I observed the Frenchman closely, and saw that he bore himself well, the only fault that I could find with his manner being that it was a trifle too obsequious for a gentleman of his rank and pretensions. His brilliant and intensely black eyes roved from object to

object with sidelong glances that spoke to me of deception, and when for a moment I encountered that serpent-like gaze, I felt thrilled by an unaccountable repulsion and dislike. There must have been a corresponding expression on my face, for he looked first surprised and then angry, though his display of these emotions was but momentary, and his face at once resumed its former look of smiling complacency. When his eyes fell upon Marian, a gleam of evil triumph seemed to light up his features. I looked at her and saw that her sunny smile had given place to a look of forced gayety, while one hand nervously closed and unclosed in the folds of her dress. Knowing her as thoroughly as I do, it was evident to me that she was no longer enjoying herself.

Making his way among the guests, everywhere greeted with sweet smiles and soft glances from the ladies, the count reached a table not far from me, which was loaded with a rare collection of curiosities. Here he took his stand with the air of a *connoisseur*. Apparently absorbed in the inspection of the different articles interesting either from beauty, workmanship, or singularity, he continued to shoot forth those singular sidelong glances which I had noticed before; but my attention was soon centred on Marian, whose air of constraint increased, as if she were endeavoring to preserve her usual demeanor while enduring a severe mental struggle. Finally her face became of a marble-like pallor, and addressing some casual remark to the gentleman with whom she was conversing she slowly and mechanically advanced toward the table before which the count was standing, looking, as she moved, like a beautiful animated statue, and with a strange helpless look in her large eyes. If I was surprised, I was also indignant, and determined that the count should not be gratified by the approach of my friend, for it was evident to me, unbeliever as I have been, that Marian was acting against her inclinations. Advancing from my corner, I drew near to her just before she reached the table, saying, laughingly:

"I saw you coming, and so came to meet you."

Such a look of delighted relief as shone upon me then from her eyes, I have never seen. A flush rose to her cheeks, her face brightened, and Marian was "herself again." "I thank you, Ada," she said

softly, but meaningly, as we turned away, and I was too triumphant to mind the look of hatred which the count bestowed upon me.

No explanation were needed between Marian and me, and I was happy to see that the count's spell was broken for the entire evening, he departing at an early hour.

Just after this little scene the Chesters entered. Minna soon came fluttering up to me, and said in a low tone:

"Do look at Dick! See what a bored expression! That is the way he acts, wherever he goes, and he's no better than a stick! I declare, I would like to shake him, and see if I couldn't put life into him. I'm going to make him come and talk to you;" and she was off before I could say a word, returning with Dick, who did indeed look "bored." However, he talked very pleasantly, and spoke of the grand fancy dress ball which Mrs. Cumberly is to give.

Richard Chester has indeed changed; but yet, in spite of his listlessness and apparent want of interest, I never felt a keener sense of enjoyment in his society than last evening, and I have not been happier in months than I am to-day, although it would be impossible for me to give any reason for my happiness. I actually look forward to the ball with a thrill of anticipation, which is very foolish, though pleasant.

A few days after the date of the last extract from Ada's journal, the three friends met at the home of Marian, and were soon deeply occupied with the question of costumes for the masked ball at which all three expected to be present, for Ada had not resisted Mrs. Cumberly's kind command to prepare to enjoy the anticipated brilliant affair. Finally, Minna decided with her friends' approval to appear in the character of an Italian flower-girl, coquetishly attired. Marian, after much discussion, was advised to dress as a Spanish *senorita*, Minna declaring that in such a costume she would be "perfectly bewildering."

"Now, Ada, what will you wear?" demanded Minna. "You seem more interested for us than for yourself."

"It doesn't matter much," responded Ada, with rather a sad smile, "but I think I'll take the part of a dignified dame of

the time of the Revolution. I happen to possess a silk of that period, and it will be economical for me to take the character."

"O, the very thing!" exclaimed Minna, in delight, and Marian added her voice in favor of the idea. "It will just suit your style, Ada," she said.

"I wonder now," cried gay Minna, "what costume Count De Longueville will wear. Whatever it is, I shall know him, for he will be likely to haunt Marian, if he can penetrate her disguise. Ada, do you know that Marian is a countess in prospective, if she will only accept the title?"

"Do not talk on that subject, I beg, Minna," hastily returned Marian. "Count De Longueville is nothing to me, and never will be."

"Well, Marian, I won't say any more at present, but there's many a girl who envies you the impression you have evidently made. Anyway, I hope you won't be a countess, for then you would leave us for another country—and I don't exactly fancy the count myself. He smirks too much."

With this the subject was dropped, but Ada noticed that the look of anxiety she had lately seen on Marian's face deepened into something like fear and loathing.

The eventful night of the ball was cold and clear, and the elegant rooms of Mrs. Cumberly were like a scene of enchantment, so beautifully were they decorated, and so fancifully attired was the motley throng which filled them. Among the crowd we are only interested in those of whom we already know.

That grave bearded Turk with the dignified air, could he stand unmasked, would prove to be none other than brown-eyed Dick Chester; that gentleman of the time of Charles I., who so well enacts his character, is Mr. Standish, Minna's betrothed; and a dashing Italian brigand is no less a personage than the Count De Longueville. Mrs. Cumberly herself wore the dress of a court lady, and no more graceful figures among the ladies could be seen than a certain fascinating Spanish *senorita*, an American beauty of the time of Washington, and a bewitching, bright-eyed Italian flower-girl. There was many a jest and much disguising of voices, but finally the Turk seemed to be particularly attracted by the American belle of old times, and the Italian brigand was about to address the *sen-*

orita, when he was unexpectedly forestalled by a remarkably distinguished-looking general of the French army, who, to the brigand's great annoyance, secured the lady's hand for the dance, and led her forth with an air of pride.

"Ha, ha," laughed a mocking voice in the ear of the brigand, "better fortune next time, my countryman;" and with a backward mischievous glance the Italian flower-girl moved away on the arm of a modern Beau Brummel.

A muttered curse, scarce-breathed, but fully thought, was the only response, as a truly piratic expression gleamed from the dark eyes fixed on the graceful motions of the *senorita* and her partner.

The rooms were very warm, and at length the Turk and his companion strolled from the crowd, and, on reaching a distant alcove whose curtains effectually shielded them from view, the Turk seemed to forget his dignity, and the lady her stately courtesy, for they engaged in conversation that savored more of the present than of the past.

"Miss Monckton," said the gentleman, "I presume you have fathomed my disguise before this."

"Yes," was the reply, "I have recognized Mr. Chester. It is needless, I see, for me to ask you a similar question."

Then there was a silence which was, perhaps, somewhat embarrassing to both parties, and which was broken by an observation from the lady, on the beauty of the costumes, and on the excellent manner in which most of them were sustained. But this was evidently surface talk, and finally the gentleman, with an air of courage lent by desperation, said:

"Miss Monckton, we do not always know our own hearts. One may sometimes be dazzled by a diamond, but, after all, I like pearls best. But tell me," he added, enigmatically, "what is a man to do if he can have neither pearl nor diamond?"

"How can I tell?" replied Ada. "One can live without either, I suppose."

"No," he returned, "every man must have his treasures, and there is one crowning jewel more precious than all the rest, without which he is 'poor indeed.' May I tell you a short story?"

Receiving a bow of assent, he continued:

"There were once placed in a certain window, side by side, a diamond without a flaw, and an exquisite pearl, which attracted the admiration of many. Among the gazers was a man who appreciated the beauty of both. One day, as he stood contemplating the jewels, a ray of sunshine penetrated to the heart of the diamond, and the trembling fire of the gem seemed to pierce the bosom of the observer, who at once became infatuated with the diamond. He thought of nothing else, dreamed of nothing else, and ceased to look at any other object, his greatest desire being to possess the glorious jewel. But the gem was not like others which shine for all alike, and to no one could it be given but to him in whose presence it should glow with a rare and unwonted splendor in the gloomiest day. The man of whom I have spoken saw with unspeakable regret that he did not possess this magical power, and at last he began to acknowledge to himself that all his devotion was in vain, and to resolve that he would remove his eyes from the unattainable object upon which alone they had been rivetted so long. As he looked away his glance fell upon the pearl, which shone with a mild and exceedingly beautiful lustre, grateful to eyes that the blaze of the diamond had tried. 'Here,' he thought, 'is indeed the gem of all others for me;' and a longing, even greater than he had felt for the diamond, entered his soul, for he knew that the pearl would give peace and happiness, and the love he cherished for it was really stronger than the wild passion he had before harbored. But he thought, 'How can I ever hope to win the pearl? It must despise me, and disbelieve all my protestations, for has it not reposed in its place all the time that I have worshipped the diamond, and beheld my infatuation? Will it not scorn the idea of such an owner?' So he became misanthropic and miserable, until at length he resolved to ask for the pearl, and know his fate. Do you think he could hope under such circumstances?"

"I think," replied the lady, with a mischievous glance, "that it would be very hard for the poor man to lose both; but perhaps there might be a carbuncle near at hand on which he could bestow his affections."

"Ada!" exclaimed Chester, reproachfully; and then, seeing no signs of a

haughty repulse in his companion's bearing, he probably gained courage, for the result of the whole was an engagement between Ada Monckton and Richard Chester.

The alcove seemed destined to be the scene of more than one confidential interview, for a little while after it had been deserted by Ada and Chester, two other figures approached it; the one an Italian brigand, the other a Spanish senorita. The gentleman was talking earnestly in French, and fixing his eyes upon his companion, he asked her to be seated. The request was complied with mechanically, as if the one addressed had no choice but to obey, though her eyes roved imploringly around, as if in search of some friendly interposition. But the two were quite alone, and she was left to listen to the impassioned suit of the man beside her. As he at length paused, she replied, with great effort, and in almost inaudible tones:

"I do not wish to pain you, Count De Longueville, and I appreciate the honor you offer me; but it can never be as you wish. I will never—"

Her voice died away in a whisper as she encountered the intense baleful gaze of her suitor; and though she tried to rise, at a motion of his she sank back helplessly, feeling as if will and resistance were paralyzed.

"Be not too hasty," he said, in a voice low, but exceedingly distinct, so distinct, indeed, that it caught the ear of a man in the attire of a French general, who was slowly approaching, and who started as he heard the accents. The next words seemed to have still greater effect upon him. They were these:

"It is not often that a count of the house of Longueville pleads in vain, and never was one more in earnest than I am, *ma belle Americaine*. I will not accept your decision as final, but will venture to predict that you will yet be the wife of Henri de Longueville. And now, surely you will not refuse me so slight a favor as a walk through the rooms with me?"

Under the steady commanding fire of those serpent-like eyes, Marian, for it was she, arose, glad of the prospect of release from such unwelcome company; and as the two walked away, they were followed by an unsuspected listener. The eyes of the count did not turn from his companion's face, and she walked on as in a dream

dimly conscious of a crowd of people, of lights and of motion, and was only partially aroused by the opening of the hall door, and a sweep of fresh air which gave her a little strength, so that she murmured brokenly:

"I will not go with you—I hate you! O, is there no one to save me?" as she caught sight of a carriage drawn up before the steps, toward which her companion strove to drag her. But at the first murmured word a tall form sprang forward, and a determined voice said:

"Scoundrell! unhand the lady!"

The count started, and turned to face the intruder.

"Fool! what do you mean? Can I not attend my wife to her carriage without being insulted by your insolent interference?"

"Talk not such lies to me!" was the stern reply. "When the maskers unmask, Francois Duroyer, if you will stay, we will settle our scores; otherwise, some other time not far away. The sea does often give up the living. Fair lady," then he added, bowing low, "may I have the honor to escort you to your friends again?"

With a sigh of relief that was almost a sob, Marian took the proffered arm of the stranger, while her tormentor, with a fearful imprecation, sprang down the steps and entered the carriage, which rolled rapidly away.

Freed from the terrible spell which had bound her, Marian began to murmur her thanks to her unknown benefactor, in whose protection she felt so perfectly safe and reassured. He, on his part, disavowed any claims to her gratitude, saying that he was well aware of the villany of which her former companion was capable, and that a just retribution would soon overtake him. These words seemed somewhat mysterious to Marian, but she had no time to ask for an explanation, as they were now on the way to the supper-room, where the merry maskers were to appear divested of their masks. Naturally it may be supposed that both the French general and the Spanish senorita felt some curiosity to see each other. But when the masks were removed, and Marian's beautiful orbs met the blue ones of the handsome man who stood by her side, there seemed to be an unaccountable amount of emotion on each side; and a keen observer would have said that the

two had met before, and that the recognition was mutual.

"*La belle Americaine!*" exclaimed the gentleman, bowing, as if to a queen; while Marian said, hurriedly:

"It was you who saved my life!"

The supper progressed, the gay company returned to the salons, and all was as a dream to Marian, who was only recalled to the reality of the present when her hostess approached and exclaimed:

"Ah, count, I am pleased to see that you have repented of your determination not to unmask. Miss Warner, allow me to present the real Count De Longueville, whose rightful place in society has so long been usurped by an impostor."

Marian acknowledged the introduction with an ill-concealed surprise, which did not diminish the easy grace of the gentleman, who said, smilingly:

"I see that Miss Warner is amazed, and I fear that she will henceforth lose all faith in supposed representatives of the French nobility. I unmasked, but should not have done so if my treacherous servant Francois Duroyer had not already left the house to my knowledge; for I would not risk the possibility of marrying your delightful entertainment by an unpleasant scene."

"Ah, well," returned Mrs. Cumberly, "I am only too thankful that we are undeceived, and I hope the fellow will be severely punished. I see that Miss Warner is filled with pardonable curiosity, which you have it in your power to satisfy." And the lady passed on to greet others of her guests.

"My story," said the count—for such was his true title—"is rather long for a ballroom, but yet it may be summed up in a few words, I think. I started for America with a confidential servant named Francois Duroyer, who possessed extraordinary mesmeric powers, and was first brought to my notice on that account, but whom I afterward liked for his seeming fidelity. During a storm our vessel became a wreck, and Francois and I, by some mischance, embarked in different boats, and we soon became widely separated. All the boats, except the one in which my valet had embarked, were reported lost, with their crews, but by a wonderful providence I was saved. I was ill for some time, and the rude people who had rescued me from death by exposure, nursed me into health.

My letters of introduction, drafts on banks, etc., were entrusted to my servant's care, and it seems that he believed me dead, and conceived the wild idea of personating me in society, though he must eventually have been found out. I was personally acquainted with our ambassador at Washington, and immediately went to him on my recovery, and then heard that some person was imposing himself upon New York society in my name. I was soon persuaded that it must be my valet, and resolved to confront him; but he has doubtless recognized my voice to-night, and may escape. His punishment, or lack of it, however, is nothing to me in comparison with the pleasure I experience at beholding the face which has so long been impressed upon my memory, and which was the guiding star that led me to this country."

"I have often wished I could tell you," faltered Marian, "of my gratitude—"

"The gratitude is mine," interrupted the count, "to Providence, for kindly permitting me to be of use to you. What I did was no more than common humanity; but your friends should not have allowed you to be so careless, for the mountain ravines of Switzerland are very treacherous."

Then, as the music floated dreamily out, Marian yielded her hand to her courtly and debonaire companion, and many an eye followed them through the dance; while the answers given by Mrs. Cumberly to questions as to the gentleman's identity did not diminish the interest; but at the close of the dance the handsome stranger disappeared.

Never had there been such an evening for Marian, and never would there be again. Mechanically she answered her aunt's many questions, and listened with unheeding ears to her exclamations of amazement at the story she had heard concerning the real and spurious Count De Longueville. Marian was existing in a new world, in which she saw but one face, heard but one voice, a face and voice which she had often before imagined, but which now had come to be a blissful reality in her life.

Ada Monckton was as happy that night as her friend Marian, in a different way; the grief that had sat "heavy on her heart" so long had taken to itself wings,

and in its place there came a bright bird of hope which charmed her soul with its sweet songs of the future; for had not her king chosen her, though she came to him dowerless, except for the priceless treasure of a warm and loving heart?

Francois Duroyer, who had so unblushingly assumed the name and role of his master, and who had hoped to gain the hand and fortune of one of New York's fairest belles, at first by persuasion, and then by force, fled in the night from his elegant rooms at a fashionable hotel, and not a trace of him was discovered. It is to be hoped that he was thereafter content to present himself in his true character, much improved by the lesson he had received by the thwarting of his schemes. The published account of the false count was read with avidity, especially by those who had met him, and were likely to encounter the real nobleman; the affair became a nine days' wonder, and then ceased to be spoken of except on rare occasions. The *bona fide* count proved to be a much more quiet and unpretentious personage than his aspiring valet; and, much to the disgust of many a fair *demoiselle* of American upper-tendom, it was soon evident that he had neither eyes nor ears for any face and voice save those pertaining to *La belle Marian*. I may be pardoned for having recourse to Ada's journal again, since what remains to be told of the three friends can be better related by her frank pen than otherwise.

March 3.—Have spent part of the day with Marian, and she has told me of her engagement to Count De Longueville. Marian has now gained the only charm that could have enhanced her beauty, for the shade of reserve which sometimes made her seem almost cold has given place to the light of joy. Her path looks very fair, and I pray that all its promises may be realized. She is much pleased with my own engagement to Richard Chester, and says she always thought we could make each other's happiness. Whatever I may have thought in the past, I cannot now doubt her sincerity.

As I was looking over some sketches of Marian's, I noticed one which particularly struck my fancy. It was evidently a Swiss view, with the Alps towering in the background, the scene itself being among the mountains. A young girl, strangely like

Marian, had approached dangerously near a precipice, and was saved from certain death by the outstretched arm of a man in whose noble form and features I seemed to recognize Count De Longueville. As Marian saw me looking at the drawing, she glanced over my shoulder and said:

"Would you like to hear the history of that, Ada?"

Of course I was curious, and she told me that the sketch was executed by the count, and that it represented their first meeting.

"He saved my life," she said; "and when my friends came up he gave me into their charge, and turned away before we had scarcely a chance to thank him, and we did not see him again or ascertain his name. He has since told me that he was summoned away immediately by news of the serious illness of his father. He says," she added, with a blush, "that he never forgot me, that he learned I was an American, and that he cherished a hope that he might meet me in this country."

So this is the romantic explanation of all that has puzzled me in times past, of all Marian's coldness and singular emotion!

Elmside, June 20.—Once more in the country, where everything is so beautiful at this time, and to-morrow is my wedding-day. It was my wish to be married quietly at Elmside in the lovely summer-time. Dick says he is contented to let me have my way in that, and everything else, although he says I am becoming quite a tyrant, at which Minna declares she is glad somebody can manage him. Need I say that I am happy—happier far than I ever expected to be?

Marian was married in May in the city, and a very grand wedding it was. She protested at having so little time, but Count De Longueville was anxious to take his lovely bride to France with him, and we all watched the vessel tearfully out of sight that bore our beautiful Marian to her foreign home. Surely never was there more lovely countess, or prouder husband. As we stood waving our handkerchiefs in response to hers, I mentally repeated Hood's exquisite lines:

"O saw ye not fair Ines?
She's gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
And rob the world of rest;
She took our daylight with her,
The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek,
And pearls upon her breast.

"Would I had been, fair Ines,
That gallant cavalier
Who rode so gayly by thy side,
And whispered thee so near!
Were there no bonny dames at home,
Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
The dearest of the dear?"

"Farewell, farewell, fair Ines.
That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before,—
Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore!
The smile that blest one lover's heart
Has broken many more!"

As we turned away, Richard whispered, "He has his diamond, but I have my pearl." And looking in his earnest eyes, I felt no fear that I should not be first in my husband's heart. The last cloud disappeared from my horizon when, a few days after Marian's departure, while driving in the Park, I met Harry Reynolds, my quondam lover, riding with pretty Laura Adams, she all smiles, and he all devotion. Evidently I have not inflicted any lasting misery in that quarter. Minna declares in her pretty positive way, that she is in no hurry to give up her liberty, and decidedly refuses to be married before next fall, though Mr. Standish would have been glad to have had their wedding take place on the same day with ours. I suspect a quiet wedding is not exactly to gay Minna's taste.

And now the night comes softly on, and my heart is filled with a great sense of thankfulness, because once upon a time I struggled with the two fiends envy and jealousy, and drove them from me; for had I not done so my cup of happiness would not have been free from the bitterness of self-reproach.

THE YOUNG SCAPEGRACE.

BY MISS CAMILLA WILLIAM.

THE McGregors were a goodly family, both in quality and quantity. Alexander McGregor, the nominal head of the family, was a lithe rosy-cheeked Highlander, with black eyes and black hair—a perfect crow's nest of little ringlets. This gentleman was a dry-goods merchant—made money as Scotchmen always do, and spent it as they do not always; loved his children, and obeyed his wife; appeared out once or twice a year in Highland costume, gallant and gay, to the boundless admiration of modern Athenians, and of his own lads and lassies, and to the intense pride of his wife, who would wipe her eyes as she saw him, and remembered the blue hills and lovely glades of “bonnie Scotland.”

McGregor *mere* was of different build, physical and mental, from her husband. Her tall brawny height exceeded his by an inch; her face was rather pale, the high cheekbones and narrow severe forehead being adorned with freckles instead of roses. Keen gray eyes and yellow sandy hair finished this not too charming *ensemble*. Mrs. McGregor was industrious, honest, thrifty, and a bit shrewish, but kind-hearted withal. Though not merry herself, she looked with a sort of grim indulgence on the pranks of Aleck and the weans, as long as they kept within bounds, and could even be provoked into a quaint quick smile upon occasions.

Seven children had grown up in this house in rapid succession; first, Wallace, a staid sandy-haired young man of twenty-four—such a person as old ladies of both sexes involuntarily destine to the ministry—an unremarkable cut-and-dried young man, whom nothing will induce me to mention again. Then came Annie, the same style, but a little enlivened and pretty; then, alas! came our scapegrace, Master Archibald; then a pair of twins—Aleck and Jessie, for father and mother—two little ones, who slept no longer tucked under the snowy counterpane by mother's careful hands, but were laid side by side, under a green cover in lovely Forest Hills, to the father's passionate grief and the mother's silent despair. Stealing shyly into the va-

cant baby places, came a little human sun-beam—Mary, they called her—a winsome lovely pet, with yellow locks and blue eyes, wherever she got them. Lastly, there abided on the lowest round of the family ladder a year-old boy, with round black eyes, and round rosy face, and plump strong fists, which belabored, unchecked, each and every member of the family who came within his reach. And this young Goliath was yecept Bruce by his patriotic parents.

Having defined his surroundings, let us return to our friend Archie. The boy had been a rebel from the first moment of his existence. He had not made his appearance in the world until a week after he was expected, which was an impertinence not to be pardoned by the waiting powers—least of all, by the punctual mother, who felt her credit at stake; and when at length he did make it convenient to appear, one of his first exploits was to kick a bowl of gruel over into the baby-basket, which had cost sister Annie infinite pains, and no little money, thereby daubing its pretty blue silk lace-covered lining, pockets and cushions, making paste of the delicate pearl-powder in its Scotch-plaid box, gumming up the teeth of his tiny ivory comb, and ruining the downy brushes and knick-knacks.

Following up this beginning, Master Archie bawled night and day, and would not be pacified, until nurse, or mother, or father, or some other walked about with him, or tossed and played with him, when he immediately became smiling as a May morning. Lying upon his back, except for the shortest of catnaps, was what he absolutely declined doing; and since his mother, in giving his age, persisted in ante-dating his actual birth by a week, the child seemed also impressed with the idea that he had time to make up, and must keep busy.

All the other children had been decidedly either dark or fair, and were distinguished as “father's children,” or “mother's children;” but here again Archie was confumacious. First, he made believe have

black hair all in kinks, but while the father complacently tucked the end of his little finger through the jetty rings, and compared his own unfaded locks with them, a gradual change came over them day by day. A soft shimmer of light stole over each wave and turn, the deep shadows lightened slowly, the close rings loosened, and the beautiful shining hair waved out a moist golden chestnut, owned neither by father nor mother. The disappointed parents fell back upon the eyes. Surely no ink could be blacker. But babies are treacherous things, and this one more than all. As, day by day, the father watched the restless lustrous orbs, little streaks of burnt amber and pale gold began to creep across their blackness, raying out from the dilating pupil. The fine luminous lines waved, and intertwined, and melted, and lo! the little wretch laughed and winked in his father's face, with beautiful golden-brown eyes, to match his lustrous hair.

The child did not improve as he grew older. He was continually climbing into high places, for the express purpose, it would seem, of tumbling down, and was never without a huge purple bump, or an ugly red scratch to adorn his face withal; he fraternized with the dirtiest Hibernians that could be found; he made mudpies in his Sunday clothes; he gave his mother's best cakes and tarts to hideous stray dogs, which congregated eagerly around him; he got out, in spite of threat and lock and key, and got lost, chasing after funerals, bands and shows; he walked over the best carpets, with his small shoes laden with mud; he left accurate photographs of his fingers, in molasses, or butter, or otherwise, on the margins of beautiful illustrated books in the parlor. But it is useless to attempt recounting his misdeeds, which would fill volumes. It is enough to say, that if any mischief was done in the house, it was always and immediately laid to Archie, and nearly always, I regret to say, with justice.

Had the boy not possessed or acquired some impervious moral armor, his heart would have been broken by the continual hail of reproof, blame and petty punishment that fell on him. At first he used to cry, make the usual child's promises, and protest he "never meant to," "couldn't help it," "wouldn't do so again," etc.; but as he grew older, such things rattled

harmless off his careless coat-of-mail. Not that he was not tender and honest; but he had got used to being a scapegrace, and took it all for granted. Reckless ways, which a more judicious management might have cured, still clung to him, and since he was continually told that he would come to no good, he did not think it worth while to try to do good.

He led all the rebels at school, and was continually getting into trouble there. Being betrayed by a confederate in writing love-notes to his master, signed Amelia, he was solemnly told that one more offence would procure his expulsion. Only the fact that these affectionate epistles had imposed on the master, and obtained several answers, saved him now. Detected shortly after in popping beans at an obnoxious school-committeeman from behind his desk, he was dismissed with contumely.

There was the usual hubbub at home, after which he was installed as clerk in his father's store, where he distinguished himself by giving promiscuous and unlimited credit to whoever asked for it, and by selling at cost to poor people.

Being promptly dismissed from this situation, Master Archie was left to himself for a time. He wandered about the streets, seeing the troops go off, and getting a little melancholy for the first time in his life. He was now twenty, and felt somewhat ashamed of his escapades and blunders, but saw no encouragement at home to confess his sins. His sense of justice told him that they magnified his faults, and though he knew that they loved him, still he could not remember a day when he had been treated with unvarying kindness. He was of an active temperament, and hated idleness, and the things he might like to do his parents objected to, without giving him better employment.

One day he was wandering about in an uneasy fretful state of mind, when he came across a poor man, who had sawed wood for them. The man was going home from his work, weeping like a child. He had been drafted, and could not afford to hire a substitute. Moreover, he had a wife and children dependent on him for support.

A bright thought struck Archie. He bade the man take courage, and he would, perhaps, help him, then hastened eagerly home to his mother.

Mrs. McGregor was in no mood to listen

to any one—least of all, to her wild shiftless laddie. The poor lady had her own troubles that day. Going unexpectedly into the kitchen, she had caught her husband patting very tenderly upon the head her pretty pert hussy of a cook. To administer a sound box on the gentleman's ear, and thus recall him to a sense of the dignity proper to his position, and to turn the girl out of the house, rather the worse for her mistress's tongue and hands, was not a work of time. But not so quickly did Mrs. Jessie McGregor's ruffled feelings find quiet.

So when Archie came to her, hat in hand, an eager blush on his handsome face, a flashing light in his beautiful eyes, she had no smile or kind word for him.

"Ah, go away about your mischief," she cried, as he commenced speaking. "It's small comfort you are to me. I don't want to hear you."

"But, mother, I want to tell you something," he persisted.

"You never told me any good, and I'll hear nought of you!" she cried, angrily. "Away with you!"

"I'm going away, mother. I've got something to do," he said, determined not to give up yet. "I want your consent to my going."

"Away wi' your blatherie, and go to the deil for aught I care!" persisted the mother, still with a vision of that awful kitchen tableau before her eyes.

Archie looked gravely at his mother for a moment, then turned and left the room. He went into the sitting-room, where Annie and the two younger children were.

"It does look so idle to see you about the house in the middle of the day," was Miss Annie's greeting. "And do shut the door quick! Can't you see that Dick is out of his cage?"

The young man went to little Bruce, who was trying to open a book at the back, and had got himself into quite a fever with his futile efforts.

"Let Archie show you the pictures," he said, setting the book open before the child.

A sounding thump and a push were his reward.

Archie rose quickly, and left the room. As he opened the front door, a light figure flitted down the stairs, and a sweet voice called his name. His heart gave a bound

as he turned and caught little Mary in his arms.

"O Archie, you kiss so hard!" she said, with a little silver laugh, shrinking from him, then putting her small white arms around his neck.

"Where is you goin'?" was her first question.

"O, somewhere far away; and I want you to go up stairs and get me a pair of scissors, to cut a lock of your hair," he said.

"Here they is," she said, triumphantly producing a pair from her pocket. "Annie sent me after them."

He severed a silken yellow lock, cut one of his own darker ones and gave to her, making her promise secrecy; then, with a last fond kiss, and a choking sensation in his throat, set her down, and left the house.

That evening he slept in the conscript camp at Long Island, and Pat Mulligan rejoiced in having found a substitute who cost him nothing; and Mrs. Pat Mulligan said her whole rosary for the dear young gentleman who had saved them from misery, and the six little Mulligans, all sleeping in one bed, whispered about it, and finally, at their mother's recommendation, said an Ave for the beautiful Mr. McGregor, and then fell asleep; as comfortable as a nest of young pigs.

But in the McGregor household were fear and trembling. When the time passed for him to come, and evening grew into night, the mother remembered his words, and the strange steady look he had given her as he went out. And Annie remembered his silence and seriousness. Little Mary said nothing. She laid the dark lock of hair in her most precious gilt-paper box, and his words in her memory, and hid the ache in her young heart, for she had promised not to tell; and this little, frail-looking, yellow-haired Scotch lassie was a Spartan in her way, and knew not how to break her word.

Archie could easily enough have been found, had it occurred to them to look in the right direction for him; but the thought that he would enter the army never entered their minds. Circumstances pointed to a ship which had that day sailed for the Mediterranean, and they doubted not that he had shipped in her. If he had ever expressed a desire for any particular life, it

was for that of a sailor. So the mother shut her sorrow and remorse in her own heart, and sister Annie wept herself to sleep nights, and the father frowned and sighed as he remembered poor Archie.

Meanwhile, Archie was trying to conform to the new order of things, which he managed to do by dint of resolution, and setting his teeth hard together. He ate bread and bacon, and drank raw coffee without milk; he slept on the ground, in a little tent, with half a dozen others; he did police duty—that is, cleared up and carried off whatever filth might collect about the camp; he drilled patiently as might be, under a young puppy of a lieutenant, who berated men old enough to be his father as though they were children.

He did not doubt that his family knew his whereabouts, for he had told Mary that he was going to the war, and had expected her promise of secrecy to bind her only that day. But, like Casabianca, the child waited the word of release, while he hardened his heart with the conviction of their unforgiving resentment.

Weeks dragged by wearily. Archie tried to get a furlough, and was told that they were not given to substitutes. He spent the little money he had, in buying the most tragical descriptions of novels, which he read lying on straw, with his candle stuck in a loaf of bread, but these soon palled upon him.

Finally he made up his mind to run away. To be sure, two or three had been shot for such an attempt since he came to the island, but Archie was not easily discouraged, and coolly laid out his plans, willing to run any risk, rather than endure such a life any longer.

Miss Minnie Leighton came down to the island to visit her father. His regiment was to start the next morning for Beaufort, and she staid with him till the last minute. Archie had seen the fair girl walking through the camp, leaning on her father's arm, bravely trying to smile, but turning often to brush off a tear that would come.

"There's nobody to cry when I go," he thought, bitterly; and he watched the girl, and longed to speak to her, and listen to one kind word from those rosy tremulous lips. For he knew that he should hear nothing but kind words from her. But she passed by without noticing him, intent only on her father.

The night drew on dark and dark. The sentries paced wearily to and fro, and the whole camp seemed to be asleep, all but a small portion from which a detachment of fifty was to be sent up to the city about nine o'clock. The headquarters were still brightly lighted, and the faint sound of laughter from there stole over the silent camp, and fell on the ears of one who listened with his heart in his mouth.

Had the night been less dark, or had the sentry been keener-sighted, he might have seen a shadow creep along the ground from the tents, toward the shore, between eight and nine o'clock. It crept slowly along in the withered grass, stopping as he approached, and starting again as he turned. Archie drew himself along on his face, inch by inch, his heart beating loudly in his ears, perspiration starting out over him, at every crackle of a dry twig under him, or gleam of light from headquarters, expecting every moment to hear a challenge, and the sharp click of the rifle-lock. His plan was to reach the shore, which was near, swim silently round to the boat at the wharf, get on board, or cling to her in some way, and get to the city.

On his way, he had to cross the very path of the sentinel, and his best way was to get as near as possible to it while the man was approaching, then cross it while his back was turned. He crawled near, and lay in a chill of fear, till the sentry turned, then slowly passed, and began descending the hill. Two minutes more, and he would be in the water. His blood began to flow warmly again, and he allowed himself to breathe freely. He even ventured to rise to his knees, and relieve his strained limbs, cramped by their half-hour's restraint. Scarcely had he done so, when a hand fell heavily on his shoulder.

"What are you doing here, sir?" demanded a stern voice.

Overcome by the sudden revulsion of feeling, Archibald McGregor could only sink half fainting at the officer's feet.

"O papa, don't tell anybody!" pleaded a soft voice. "Spare this poor man for my sake, dear papa. You know I may never ask you any favor again."

Colonel Leighton, who had been about to call the sentry, hesitated.

"What have you to say for yourself?" he asked, in a gentler tone. "Are you a bounty-jumper?"

This insulting question, by making the young soldier angry, restored his self-possession, and he immediately told his whole story.

"You say that you are willing to go into action, and only meant to take a furlough?" said the officer. "If I can get you exchanged, will you go with me tomorrow to Beaufort?"

"Yes sir; gladly."

"The young man who did my writing is ill, and will have to be left behind. I can get you into his place, I think. Come, now, and I will go by the sentry with you. Wait one moment for me, Minnie, and I will go to the boat with you. There's the signal."

"I want to speak one word to him," whispered the girl. Then, taking the soldier's hand, she raised her pale face, and said, in a passionate undertone, "You will take care of my father?"

"I will, miss. You have saved my life, perhaps, and I will save his, if I have to die for it!"

Soft hands pressed his convulsively, there was a murmured word of thanks and good-by, then the colonel took him by the arm, and walked him back to his tent again.

The next morning Archie McGregor steamed down the harbor, on board the transport for Beaufort. There was little for them to do there, and presently they were sent up to Petersburg.

No lack of work in front of Petersburg. They dug and bored into the earth like moles, laying out sunken avenues; they crawled toward the enemy, scooping out safety-pits for themselves as they advanced; they made and repelled charges; they sent shell and shot into the stubborn doomed city. And no one worked harder than Archie. He felt his colonel's eye upon him, in calm cool observation, and burned to wipe out the stain of that attempted desertion. Moreover, he had ever in his heart the tender pleadings of that gentle girl, and resolved, at whatever risk, that she should be proud of her protegee, and should see that he had redeemed his promise.

He had the opportunity to do so sooner than he expected. One day the colonel was examining some works, and exposed himself quite incautiously. In an instant Archie saw a glister from a rifle-pit not

far from them, and had just time to throw himself upon the officer, when the iron messenger pierced his shoulder. There had been the glister of another rifle-barrel nearer, and a shot struck the little moving heap of earth that covered the rebel's head. A stifled cry, then silence.

Archie was borne tenderly to the rear, the colonel walking beside him, and holding his hand all the way. The stern soldier had liked the boy, but could never quite forget the occasion of their first meeting till now. Now, as he walked by his side, and saw the blood flowing, which had probably saved his life, he reproached himself for his mistrust and coldness.

"My dear boy," he said, "what induced you to do such a thing?"

Archie smiled faintly.

"I promised her I would, colonel."

"Her? Whom?"

"Your daughter, sir. She begged me that night not to let you get killed."

Tears rushed into the soldier's eyes. It was his little Minnie's hand, then, that had warded the blow from her father's life.

"Tell her I kept my promise," said Archie, in a whisper, as his senses floated slowly to oblivion on the rushing tide of blood.

Nothing was omitted which could be done for him. Colonel Leighton himself took him to a hospital in Washington, and when his duties recalled him to the front, left him in charge of a surgeon who was his friend, with orders that nothing should be spared to aid his recovery. The colonel also wrote to his parents a letter, highly commending their son's bravery and devotion; and finally promised him promotion.

When Archie came out of his fever-dream, there sat his mother beside him, in the long silent ward. It took but a few words to make him understand that the colonel's letter was the first intimation of his whereabouts, and the young soldier read in her fond tearful eyes, that at last his mother was proud of him, while he could not doubt she had always loved him.

As he grew stronger, she put a paper into his hand, her eyes shining. It was a lieutenant's commission. Then a little missive, which he opened blankly, but read with many blushes—a letter of enthusiastic gratitude and affection from Miss Minnie Leighton. Never was such a blissful wound, he thought.

As he got better, Mrs. McGregor attacked the dilatory surgeons, and completely routed them, announcing and carrying out her intention of taking her son home, furlough or no furlough. And, after a weary time, the son, who went out in silence, flouted by each one, was brought back in triumph, and the whole family bowed down before him, and waited on him, and wept joyfully over him. Little Mary's greeting was singular.

"O, I never told! I never told, Archie!" she cried, hysterically, embracing him. "It was Colonel Leighton that wrote."

"Dear Mary!" said her brother. "What, did you never tell them where I was?"

"No, Archie," she sobbed; "and it has most killed me. I kept the lock of your hair, and I never told."

Archie fairly burst into tears at the poor child's devotion and suffering.

"And so that child knew where you were all the time?" exclaimed Mrs. McGregor. "We saw that she was pining for you; she hasn't been the same child since you went away, Archie; but to think—"

The mother stopped, choked a little, as she tenderly smoothed the silken locks, then began bustling about for her son's comfort.

The day after his arrival, as he lay asleep upon the sofa, a slight stir at the door roused him.

"If I might only see him a minute, without disturbing him," said a soft voice.

Archie shivered with a delicious tremor, but kept his eyes closed. Presently a soft hand touched his, warm tears fell on his face, and a kiss, light and sweet as the touch of a rose-leaf, was pressed on his forehead.

"He saved my dear father's life, Mrs. McGregor," said Minnie Leighton's weeping voice. "I can never thank him enough, never love him enough. There's only father and I, since mother died, and either of us would die without the other."

Archie opened his eyes, and met the lovely tearful ones of his beloved. Something in the glance made them both blush.

"O, did I wake you?" she said, drawing back.

"No; yes—"

"See, I brought you some flowers," she continued, recovering.

If our young scapegrace did not mend

rapidly, it was not for want of attention. Besides, his family, and five hundred friends, and friends of Colonel Leighton, who called on him, Minnie came to see him every day. She was eighteen, and he twenty-one. The result was inevitable. Before Mrs. McGregor well knew what she was about, Archie announced to her that he and Minnie were engaged, on condition of her father's consent.

"Engaged!" repeated his mother, holding up her hands in astonishment. "Why, how long is it since you were popping beans at a school-committeeman, Archie?"

"O mother, it isn't fair to remind me of those things now," he said, gently. "I am far from them in experience, if not in years; and I am as old as father was when he was engaged to you."

"True; but your father was a thrifty laddie."

"And I am going to be one, mother. Father has promised to take me into business with him when the war is over."

Minnie's first intimation of the state of affairs to her father, was answered by an order for Lieutenant McGregor to join his regiment immediately.

"And so you're going to marry my daughter, sir?" was the colonel's first greeting.

"Not without your consent, sir," said Archie, with modest firmness. "I am not worthy now, but I hope to earn her by-and-by. There's no hurry."

Archie was back just in time for the last struggle. Everybody has read of those last five days; but everybody does not know that our friend Lieutenant McGregor commanded a company in the sixth corps, when it rushed over those two miles of defensive works, taking them all, their solid bank of glittering bayonets closing up as fast as the murderous fire of shot and shell plowed them, charging forward in the face of such a fire as the war had scarcely seen before, enveloped in smoke, rushing into the enemy's very bayonets, finishing up Sunday noon, by driving the last rebel out of Fort Mahone. And then, Monday morning into Petersburg! It was worth while lying in the ditches around that town so many months, if one might at last enter it so gloriously.

"I'll go to Petersburg," a distinguished officer had said, "if I have to go from the mouth of the 'Petersburg Express.'"

This "Petersburg Express" was a gun in a battery near Friend House, from whose mouth our Union soldiers had been in the habit of sending daily complimentary bombshells into the city. Now the gallant general rode in at the head of his division, with Colonel Leighton at his elbow, and Lieutenant Archie not far behind.

A few weeks after a boat put off from Long Island, Boston harbor, and was rowed across to Galloupe's Island, where the party on board took the government steamer to the city. The party consisted of two officers, an elderly and a young one, and a young lady.

"I was determined to go over, papa, and I'm glad I did," said the lady, "I wanted to welcome you again there where I said good-by to you."

"I suppose McGregor has nothing to do with your memories of the place?" remarked papa, between the whiffs of his cigar.

Miss Minnie blushed and pouted a little, but said nothing. She only stole her hand down into one that waited to receive it.

As they steamed slowly up the harbor, in the summer twilight, pert little sloops

and brigs fled past them, their masters obligingly offering a rope in passing. But nobody minded these taunts. Precious freight had that boat pulsed slowly over the waters with, day after day—men who went out to fight and die for their country and for justice. The boat that "carried Cæsar" was not so richly laden. They moved past vessels, like ghosts, some fixed, others gliding along, the foam just hissing about their bows, as though saying "Hush!" and up toward the city, that stood out in soft lights and shadows against the orange background of a cloudless sunset. Then the "sentinel stars set their watch in the sky," and long tremulous reflections from lighted gas-burners reached far out over the waters toward them.

Minnie remembered an old song, and, sitting between her father and lover, sang softly:

"In distance, like a vision
That floats on the shades of night,
The town with all its turrets,
Through twilight gleams on the sight;"

murmuring the words to a wild melancholy air of Mendelsøhn's. Then, sighing, she was silent.

THE EXCLUSIVE MRS. EDGEWELL.

BY MRS. CAROLINE ORNE.

CHAPTER I.

"*THERE*, Aunt Edgewell, I have finished the last of the six ruffles for your beautiful India muslin."

Cecilia Laurens said this in an airy cheerful way, as she clipped the half-used needleful of thread, and looked up to a middle-aged lady who sat languidly leaning back in a lounging-chair.

"Have you?" said her aunt, coldly.

"Yes, aunt; and to hem and gather six such long strips of muslin is no little achievement, in my opinion. The next thing, I suppose, is to sew the ruffles on to the dress."

"No, I have other work for you to do. I've decided that a muslin dress is not what I ought to wear to Mrs. Hovedon's party."

"Why, no dress could be more lovely, aunt!"

"A nun's white robes may be lovely, but I have decided that I must have something magnificent—superb!"

"Why must you?"

"Cecilia, how dull you are! Don't you think of any reason?"

"None in the world, auntie. If a week ago you thought the white muslin dress would be just what you wished to wear, why not think so now?"

"You will not repeat the question when I tell you that Lady Blois, from England, whose husband died several years ago, leaving her an immense fortune, is to be at the party, accompanied by her nephew Sir Tancred Overdue, who is to be her heir. I've been trying all the morning to think of some fabric for a dress rich enough to be in keeping with my costliest jewels. Nothing but the skirt of the muslin dress is done, and, as you think it is so beautiful, you can have it fitted for you to wear to the party. You are a trifle taller than I am, but there are more ways than one to remedy that."

"O yes, certainly."

"But what am I to wear? I'm in a labyrinth of doubt and perplexity. I want something unique as it is splendid. Then, there's another thing that frets and wor-

ries me. I can think of no dressmaker on whose inventive talent I can depend. I won't have it made in the same fashion that Mrs. A., and Mrs. B., and Mrs. Everybody have theirs."

"I think that Miss Linton is a good dressmaker."

"Yes, good; but after good come better, best. None but the superlative will do for me, on what I call this great occasion."

"Possibly were Miss Linton and I to combine our inventive powers, we could think of something that may prove satisfactory."

"Your suggestion gives me a ray of light," said Mrs. Edgewell, with an air of satisfaction. "The dressmaker you refer to must be consulted at once. And you, I know, will think as I do, that it will be nothing more than right for you to give the matter your time and your undivided attention, until you can arrive at what, to me, will be a satisfactory result; as in reality it is all for your benefit. I am too unselfish not to ignore what might be for my own advantage in a crisis like this."

"Why, aunt, do you think that going to Mrs. Hovedon's party is important enough to be called a crisis?"

"Yes, I do. You seem to forget there's to be a peeress and a baronet of England present, and that consequently my appearance must be such as to show my position in society. It will be of much consequence to you, as you will be known as my niece, and your introduction to a baronet may prove the pivot on which the wheel of fortune will, as it were, make a golden turn."

"Some things are better than gold."

"An assertion truly remarkable for its wisdom," said Mrs. Edgewell, in a tone of sarcasm. "No doubt the young mechanic I saw you talking with yesterday is one of them."

"He is, if a good name, skill and talent are better. I heard the celebrated telescope maker, whom I saw the other day, say that Julian Herbert could make as good a telescope as he could."

"In other words, he is a good mechanic. A carpenter, as a carpenter, may stand as

high as the ridgepole of the house he helps build, but a mechanic has no legitimate claim to be called a gentleman."

"It isn't the talent of constructiveness and skill of hand that entitles Julian Herbert to the appellation of gentleman. It is his intellectual and moral worth, and that true politeness which springs from the heart, that make him worthy of that distinction. Those who know him best call him a gentleman; and what is better, he is one."

"He isn't called so by those who understand and recognize the right to be exclusive. In Europe he would be looked down upon by the higher classes, and called a *parvenu*."

Cecilia flushed a little, for she could not help being disconcerted and slightly irritated by her aunt's disparaging remarks relative to Julian Herbert. But as soon as she had time to realize the folly and incongruity of aping the manners and usages of the European aristocracy, founded as they are on institutions so different from those of a republic, her sense of the ludicrous, augmented by the powerful solemnity depicted in her aunt's elongated countenance, as she gave utterance to her ultra highbred ideas, wrought in her mind so speedy a revulsion, that she found it difficult to repress her risibility. By the promptings of her own generous nature, and her delicate sensitiveness, which made her shrink from giving pain to another, she conquered the impulse to laugh, and at the same time, casting away all unamiable feeling, and thus giving free scope to the charity which thinketh no evil, the natural freshness and buoyancy of her spirits resumed their sway.

Was this delightful freshness and buoyancy to last? Was there not, as in the bee's polished sting, a venom lurking in the shining needle, which, though fine and delicate, and with eye so small as to hold nothing coarser than a thread of gossamer, would show itself, if she continued to ply this little innocent needle twelve hours in the twenty-four day after day? Would not both heart and hand grow weary, and the fragile thread by slow but sure degrees bind and repress, as with a chain of iron, the buoyancy and glow of her spirits? Although there's danger of this, for several reasons she may escape unscathed. Being only a little more than midway of her

teens, and with a sound constitution, she has an aptitude, not uncommon to those of her age and temperament, to throw off and rise above the little worries and infelicities incident to human life.

She was naturally too frank and open to entertain even the shadow of a suspicion that her aunt had insidiously entrapped her into becoming her seamstress. In doing this Mrs. Edgewell was not, as might be apprehended, actuated by a miserly disposition. Selfishness was the power which shaped and manipulated her designs, and brought them into action. Cecilia unconsciously ministered to this unlovely trait by the cheerfulness with which, with few exceptions, she yielded her own wishes to her aunt's whims; and though annoyed by them, excused her little freaks of temper.

During the many hours she sat with her needle glancing along a dreary track of cambric or muslin, swiftly as a miniature steam-engine, she had imperceptibly acquired a habit of introspection. Her mind was too active, its intellectual forces too strong and vivid, to inspire no higher thoughts and aspirations than could be impaled on a needle, and thence pass into a dead level, like a row of evenly-set stitches. The action of mind and body was reciprocal. They upheld and vitalized each other.

During this little episode Mrs. Edgewell and her niece were endeavoring to decide as to the elder lady's dress. Velvets, satins and silks of every hue and quality, lovely laces, beautiful flowers and appropriate ribbons were discussed with earnestness and volubility. Ruby-colored velvet was finally decided on for the dress, with satin overskirt and trimmings of a shade to harmonize, and as much point lace as good taste demanded. The crowning splendor was to be her diamond jewelry, consisting of necklace, bracelets, etc.

Materials for the dress were purchased without delay. Miss Linton the dress-maker, whose natural gifts of imitation and constructiveness were developed and improved by experience, assisted by the good taste and deft fingers of Cecilia, succeeded by persistent industry in cutting and making the gorgeous vestments, to the last fold of the elaborate trimmings, in a manner to satisfy the fastidious taste of Mrs. Edgewell.

The India muslin was fitted for Cecilia;

the only ornament she intended to wear being a few sprays of violets. Though there was comparatively little to do to finish the dress, she and Miss Linton, in order to do so, were compelled to steal a few hours from the time that ought to have been given to rest.

CHAPTER II.

BEING Mrs. Hovedon's particular friend, Mrs. Edgewell decided to waive ceremony, and anticipate by half an hour or more the time appointed for the guests to assemble, and thus secure an opportunity for a quiet chat. Mrs. Hovedon, who was something of a gossip herself, was delighted with the arrangement.

"I didn't know," said Mrs. Edgewell, "but you would think that I was presuming too much upon your good-nature by coming so early."

"No indeed; it will be a rest to me to have a little talk with you."

"Well, before we speak of anything else, I will ask if you have invited Julian Herbert."

"Why yes. Is there any reason why he shouldn't be invited?"

"I should think there was, and a very important one, too."

"Why, I thought he would be an ornament to the party, he is so fine-looking and so intelligent."

"Yes, I suppose he is sufficiently intelligent to understand his trade. He is a good mechanic, I am told, and that, I presume, is the height of his intelligence. Now I think that as a rule, my dear Mrs. Hovedon, when we invite guests to a party we should be discriminating. We should select those who hold a similar position in society. Now I suspect that a peeress in her own right, and a baronet who, as I've been told, can trace his descent from William the Conqueror, will not, to say the least, be much flattered to be placed on a social level with a poor mechanic."

"We can save wounding Sir Tancred's dignity by forbearing to allude to Julian's employment."

"In that, my dear Mrs. Hovedon, you are mistaken. The landlady of the hotel, where the baronet and his aunt board, told me that she heard him say that he could tell a mechanic or a farmer the moment he set eyes on him. Now I think that the

wisest and safest thing you can do is to write a polite note to Julian Herbert, and say, for a particular reason, that you will explain to him some future time, you will consider it a favor if he will absent himself this evening."

"I cannot be rude and mean to save Sir Tancred's dignity; and, to confess the truth, I don't think it worth it if he is so easily wounded as that."

"I am half tempted to take the responsibility of sending him a note myself."

"You are too late. I can see through the hall-door that the countess and her nephew have arrived; and, what is more, a bevy of young people, among whom is Julian, are in their wake."

Cecilia, who had sat apart from the older ladies, now laid down the book she had been reading. Mrs. Edgewell, who was the first to be introduced to the countess and her nephew, in the plenitude of her satisfaction, did not notice that, although Mrs. Hovedon gave Cecilia an introduction to her noble guests, their attention was so irresistibly attracted by something they saw in the distance as to make them totally oblivious to the honor; or, as they would consider it, the dishonor thus thrust upon them.

It was not so with regard to a stout coarse-looking woman by the name of Bursley, who, although nearly forty years old, still remained in a state of single blessedness. This by some was thought somewhat singular, as, in consequence of a munificent bequest from a bachelor uncle, she was, next to Mrs. Edgewell, the wealthiest lady in the place. In outer adornments they were rivals. Miss Bursley's diamonds, in particular, being little less magnificent than Mrs. Edgewell's. To the young baronet there seemed to be something so fascinating in the glitter and sparkle of these jewels as to make him insensible to the fresh beauty of Cecilia, which her aunt had hoped would make a favorable impression on him. Said a young man, who, with Julian Herbert, stood a little apart:

"Look, and tell me if you don't think that this titled stranger whom Mrs. Hovedon manifests such a desire to honor, looks at Miss Bursley's diamonds with hungry eyes, and in a way that seems to say, 'I should like to have the privilege of turning you into dollars and cents.'"

"I confess that it does seem like that."

cannot be her beauty that so chains his attention."

"No, for compared to Cecilia Laurens, she realizes what a 'Dutch fishwife must be to a Psyche.'"

"He is undoubtedly thinking of the jewels, and seems as much rapt in contemplating them as Macbeth did, when in prospective he saw a crown. If the rich and abundant hair of Miss Laurens, which in strong lights throws out gleams of gold, was only encircled by a tiara of diamonds, his indifference, no doubt, would change to admiration."

"Yes," replied Julian. "He might even become aware that her clear brown eyes, with their long silky lashes, had some beauty in them; that though around her mouth are curves which at times give it piquancy, they do not mar its sweetness; and that her cheeks have the bloom and freshness of the red rose when it holds the morning dew in its heart."

"Your style of describing her is somewhat flowery—highflown, some might say."

"Not at all," said Julian. "It is nothing more than a literal rendering of her physiognomical traits."

"And yet, if joined to a cold haughty demeanor, they would lose their charm."

"You are right. So far from this, the same as a sunbeam, she carries with her a brightness that fills the air, annihilating with its spells all that is dull, languid and despondent. Even the sound of her voice steals into the heart with a subtle vivifying power, and with a sweetness such as might be shed

"From ambrosial spirits' wings."

Cecilia had a lively imagination, but this oftentimes erratic faculty being balanced and held in check by a mind remarkably clear and logical for one of her years, she arrived at conclusions with a certainty and celerity that seemed like intuition. As she sat unnoticed by the baronet, she took notes of him in her mind, one of which was, his heart, if he had one, could be readily reached by splendor and show; and that he must have a monomania for costly jewelry.

"How glad I am that I didn't wear any," was her silent comment.

When supper was served she had opportunity to perceive that, in addition to the jewel-bedazzled avenue that led to his

heart, there was another conductor, of rather heavy calibre, that found its way through his stomach. As he sat at the table he boasted, among other things, of his military achievements, which none, though they laughed in their sleeves, took upon themselves to gainsay, unless a remark made by Julian Herbert might have been so considered. He, when the baronet said, among other things, that his great-grandfather fought under William the Conqueror, and performed feats of indescribable bravery, even fighting hand to hand with the great traitor Cromwell, whom he disarmed and compelled to beg for his life, said to him, in a quiet way:

"Your great-grandfather must have lived to a Methusalonian age."

That Sir Tancred, whatever might have been his warlike achievements, was a valiant trencher-man, was proved then and there; for, notwithstanding the disparaging remarks made by him, and seconded by the countess, relative to the deplorable ignorance of the culinary science in America, greatly to the annoyance and discomfort of those whose gastronomical tastes had been educated and refined by sitting at the luxuriantly-served tables of the nobility in different parts of Europe, the adroitness and celerity with which he disposed of the ill-cooked and ill-flavored viands placed before him, gave a slight intimation of how fearful his valor and destructiveness must have been had they suited his palate.

CHAPTER III.

It has been said by a popular writer that if a person wishes to communicate something important to a friend, just get his ear when some one has been persuaded to play the piano, which is sure to set running a torrent of chitchat. The truth and wisdom of this assertion have been proved too often to admit of refutation. Mrs. Edgewell knew this, and profited by her knowledge.

"Isn't Mrs. Hovedon's noble guest a fine-looking man?" said she, to Cecilia, when a young girl had begun to play upon the piano, and the attendant buzz and hum of voices had arrived at a point where none but a keen ear could overhear what she said.

"No, aunt, not according to my ideas of fine looks."

"How can you say so?" regarding Cecilia with a look of astonishment.

"Because I think so."

"I don't believe that you can find fault with a single feature in his face. Take his eyes, for instance. They are blue as the sky. I always liked blue eyes."

"I care less about the color of eyes than their expression."

"What all the expression of his, I desire to know?"

"Nothing, only they have a wavering, apprehensive—not to say villanous look—as if he imagined that he was either in the company of pickpockets, or was himself one of that kind of gentry. This wavering and quavering of his eyes is, moreover, every now and then, interluded by a quick crafty side-glance, when he supposes he is unobserved."

"Cecilia, do you realize what you are saying? I didn't think you capable of making such ill-natured remarks. Just look at him, as he stands talking to Miss Bursley. You can't help owning that he has a certain air of gentility."

"He would look less awkward, if he didn't every other minute give his neck such a twist as to threaten its dislocation, that he may get a better look at Jemmy Bursley's diamond studs. Jemmy is too obtuse to see that he stands too far back of him—so far as to bring him inconveniently out of line."

"Nonsense?"

"Nonsense or not, I'm persuaded that there's treachery and crime folded up in that man's life. If these folds could be rent apart, believe me, dear aunt, a startling record would be disclosed. To me he is one of those on whom there isn't 'a finger-touch of God left whole.'"

"You flatter yourself that you have a natural gift for reading characters. Be that as it may, you seem, all at once, to have acquired a talent for searching out faults. You may possibly, in your eagerness to find them, mistake gold for tinsel. You have certainly, in one instance I could name, mistaken tinsel for gold. His faults—you understand whom I mean—you see through a microscope; those of the other, forgetful of his high social position, though they are such trivial things as a glance of the eye, or a turn of the head, by looking

through a telescope, you magnify into signs of all manner of vices, and even crimes."

Just then the music ceased, and with it what might no longer be called a buzz, but clack of voices; those who had most earnestly urged the timid girl to gratify their musical proclivities, by giving them a simple song, or anything she pleased, being among those who had talked the loudest and the fastest.

"Why, Susie Derweut, you mustn't leave the piano," said one of these fast talkers, "without giving us one more of your sweet simple songs. I so like to hear them."

"I think my friend Cecilia Laurens will be so obliging as to take my place. Don't you think she will, Mrs. Edgewell? You understand how little I know about music, and how much better your niece sings and plays than I can."

"You have done very well, Susie, considering your advantages. Cecilia, no doubt, will be willing to take your place. You had better go and ask her, dear."

Mrs. Edgewell said this with much vivacity, for it was an arrangement which would not only bring Cecilia under the eye of the patrician guest, but compel her to withdraw from the vicinity of Julian Herbert, between whom and her niece she imagined that she had several times detected an interchange of glances.

"I really think," was Mrs. Edgewell's mental soliloquy, "that Sir Tancred supposes she is an underling—my waiting-maid, for instance. If he does, thanks to my own foolish remissness, in allowing her to have her own way about dressing so plainly. Such an inference would be perfectly natural, our republican institutions are such levellers."

While these thoughts were passing through her mind, she at the same time threw a furtive look towards Cecilia, to see if she promptly answered Susie's request, and whether she exchanged a parting glance with Julian. This last she was prevented from ascertaining, by the sudden intervention of an obtrusive head.

"My niece will soon give us some music now, Sir Tancred," said Mrs. Edgewell.

"Your niece? Did you say your niece, madam?"

"I did. She is the Miss Laurens who was introduced to you, when you first came."

"Ah—I thought—I didn't know—that is,

there were so many faces that were new to me, I didn't particularly observe Miss Laurens."

"Didn't observe her?" said the countess. "But I can account for it, Mrs. Edgewell; it is because he is so conscientious. He has been taught from early boyhood to pay great deference and attention to those who are approaching, or have passed the meridian of life. This accounts for his overlooking the most beautiful and interesting young lady I have seen since we came to this country. Why, the daughters of the royal household of England—and I've had ample opportunity to judge—didn't excel her in personal graces. You'll be of my opinion, nephew, when you can get a fair look at her."

"O, without doubt," but lowering his voice, though not enough to prevent those with quick ears from hearing, he went on to say, "you know, aunt, that where there are no classes in society, or no distinctions, except those so loosely drawn as to run into, and mingle with each other, 'it is impossible for a gentleman of high birth, if not constantly on the alert, to prevent making mistakes. For instance, he might be degraded into honoring with particular attention some girl with a pretty face, who, although he met her in the very best American society, might turn out to be a milkmaid.'"

Cecilia obeyed the summons of her aunt, in season to hear this last remark, and as, with the airy grace natural to her, she seated herself on the music-stool, she said:

"Pardon me, Sir Tancred, but there being as a class, no milkmaids in the United States, as far as they are concerned, the dignity of the Prince of Wales would not be endangered. It is true, that a rich farmer's wife, and her half dozen daughters, more or less, when there is so much out-door work to do, that even the chore-boy has to be pressed into the service, often join their forces in milking the cows, so that for the nonce, they may all be called milkmaids."

The honorable guest opened his eyes wide with either real or feigned astonishment, while the countess, with a sly wink to her nephew, asked Cecilia if she would oblige her by performing a piece which she named by one of the great Italian masters, to which she had often been a delighted listener, when in Italy. Cecilia signified

her willingness to oblige her, and immediate search was made for the music in question; and as it did not come readily to hand, Sir Tancred continued the conversation by inquiring of Cecilia if she had ever had ocular demonstration of this facility whereby the lady could be merged into the servant.

"I have both ocular and actual," she answered. "When, about a year ago, I was on a visit to one of my uncles, I more than once saw my cousin Bessie, his eldest daughter, milk several cows, and I used to help her."

"Is it possible? To me, it seems a desecration—a mingling of the low and vulgar with the exalted and refined. But, perhaps this cousin of yours made no pretensions to refinement."

"No, she did not. Being in possession of the reality, there was no need of her making any."

"One thing, however, must be certain. It must have a damaging effect on her future prospects in life, if she should aspire to be the wife of anybody above a clown, or, to go a step higher, a farmer, or a mechanic."

"It is too late to think of that now. She has been married more than six months, to a man who can swing a scythe, hold a plow, or wield an axe to such good purpose, as to lay low the Anak of the forest with as much apparent ease, as a schoolboy would cut a willow-wand for a whistle. All these he can do, to say nothing of his skill in mechanics."

"And she, of course, has found her level—that of a household drudge. Nothing better could be expected."

"Yes, Bessie has, as you say, found her level. But instead of sinking, she rose to find it. She was a well-endowed bride, and, moreover, an heiress. Thanks to a rich aunt for whom she was named. The day she was married she came into possession of forty thousand dollars."

"Ah, I see. Light dawns upon me. This Jack-of-all trades, among the rest, was a fortune hunter."

"And consequently," said Cecilia, "he might, you imagine, take counsel of expediency, and act on the crafty advice which Tennyson makes a Quaker give his northern farmer. First asking the question. 'Wara't I crazed for the lassee mysen' when I wur a lad?' he went on to say:

"But I know'd a quaker-feller as often 'as tow'd ma this:
Doant thee marry for munny but goa wheer munny is!"

"And it seems he did go where 'twas."

"Yes," replied Cecilia, "though he neither broke into banks nor jewellers' shops;" and turning to the piano, she ran her fingers over the keys, improvising an accompaniment to a brisk old ballad tune, to which she adapted the words:

"Them as has munny an' all—wo't's a beauty?
—the flower as blows—
But próputty, propúttý stícks, and propúttý,
propúttý grows."

"That, however," said Cecilia, leaving off singing and playing abruptly, "depends on who owns the property and how it was obtained. You may imagine me superstitious, but it seems to me that wealth accumulated unfairly is apt to slip through the fingers. My cousin's husband doesn't belong to that class."

Meanwhile Julian Herbert had been quietly making his way toward the piano, and now made one of the group near it. "I suppose," said he, addressing Cecilia, "that you refer to the Honorable Richard Roland, formerly a member of congress, and now governor of this State."

"I do."

"I know him well," said a gentleman, whose name was Harmon. "Honorable, as applied to him, is not only a title prescribed by custom to those who fill offices of power and trust under government, but a true index and exponent of his character."

"It is plain to see, therefore," said Cecilia, "that my cousin didn't stoop when she became the wife of Richard Roland. Neither was she overwhelmed with the honor of marrying a governor."

"By no means," replied Mr. Harmon. "A well-educated Yankee girl—by education, I don't mean book-knowledge alone—is too high-spirited too self-reliant, to be like the village maiden your reference to Tennyson brought to mind. You recollect whom I mean, Miss Laurens."

"O yes. You refer to her whom Lord Burlleigh, disguised as a landscape painter, won for his wife, and who when she found she had married a lord, instead of a painter, was weighed down

"With the burden of an honor
Unto which she was not born."

"What in this poor girl, owing to her early instructions," said Mr. Harmon, "was no doubt thought to be an amiable, praiseworthy humility, would have been considered by your cousin nothing better than a mean grovelling abjectness, as it would, likewise, by her youthful compeers, and above all by the gentleman who sought her hand."

"I suppose, Sir Tancred, that you remember this little story in verse, by Tennyson, as well as his northern farmer."

"Pardon my ignorance, Miss Laurens, but my station in life does not require me to read works on farming."

"Of course not," replied Cecilia, a spirit of mischief twinkling in her eyes—"and in return I ask your pardon for imagining for a single moment, that you were one to be interested in an employment which engaged the time and attention of such men as Cincinnatus and others belonging to the early Roman Republic."

"Your pardon is most freely granted, Miss Laurens," said he, the irony of what she said being hidden by the supremacy of his self-conceit.

"The prejudices of birth, whether it be high or low, will cleave to us, Miss Laurens, will crop out. It is, therefore, no wonder that your sympathies, instead of being with the high and noble, should be with those like this Mr. Cincinnatus, I think you called him, and other farmers. On the other hand, I dare say that you will tolerate the sympathy which I must perforce feel for my compeers of the aristocracy, when I tell you I am determined to make a point of holding in check such prejudices as I must naturally entertain, if you will allow me to make two exceptions."

"O, that I am willing to do. Please name these two pet prejudices."

"In the first place, I cannot stoop to the level of a mechanic. Should I meet one in any of your social gatherings, I must hold myself aloof from him, which fortunately I can easily do, as they carry with them—as I may say—their trade-mark in the shape of round shoulders and stiff pointed elbows. Why, if I should discover one of them, I should be in constant fear that in some unguarded moment my ribs might be endangered. You yourself cannot have failed to notice those personal deformities I allude to, owing no doubt to the constrained posture they are compelled

to maintain, during so large a portion of their time. In the second place, I object to meeting clodhoppers—farmers, if you please so to call them. Only think of the danger incurred by delicately slipped feet, among heavy mud-besmeared brogans."

"Be certain, Sir Tancred, that I should consider it not only impolite but cruel for me, or any one, to aid or abet any proceeding which would expose you or the countess to such painful and disagreeable contingencies as you allude to."

"Is that fellow a fool?" said a lady in a low voice to Mr. Harmon.

"No, I think that in reality he's a rogue."

"And is acting a part."

"Yes, but has not wisdom enough not to overact it."

"It may be well to keep an eye on him."

"I think so."

In answer to an expressive look from Julian Herbert, Mr. Harmon gave his young friend an introduction to the fastidious baronet. The cold steely glitter gleaming through the blue of his eyes, mellowed a little, as he scanned the young man with one of his swift wavering glances.

"No 'trade mark' there," he said, mentally, as with a feeling of triumph he congratulated himself on having so speedy an opportunity to prove the truth of what he had said, relative to his unerring capability of detecting those personal marks which cleave to the mechanic or the farmer. This he doubtless had done, and could do in any of those countries where the lines of demarcation are so sharply drawn between those of low and high degree. Consequently he bowed a shade lower, and acknowledged the introduction in a voice less drawing than was his wont, when he met those whom he wished to impress with a high sense of his dignity and rank.

One thing he was compelled to admit. This Julian Herbert, in symmetry, grace and manly beauty, surpassed every young man present, himself not excepted. Though this excited his envy, on the whole he was disposed to tolerate the young American. Accordingly he treated him with some attention, though in a way which he took pains to make appear was an amiable condescension.

Among other things he spoke of himself as a great traveller. Warming with his subject, he became voluble, and forgetful

of his pronunciation. He had, he said, been as far north as the Arctic regions, and as far south as Egypt, where, owing to the great heat of the climate, and the scarcity of inhabitants in many places, instead of beef, he was reduced to the necessity of dining on "hard heggs," with which he took care to have his portmantré well supplied. The mispronunciation of the two words—hard eggs, said to be the shibboleth by which the London cockney may be recognized—made it difficult for some who were within hearing to suppress a smile.

After a protracted search it was made known that the piece of music alluded to by the countess was not to be found.

"Sometimes we don't care to succeed in what is undertaken. If the music was found, the young person who was to be the performer probably knows it would be too hard for her, and thinks if it is not found she will save her credit."

This was said aside by the countess to her nephew, her voice being covered by the little chorus of regrets intended to show sympathy with her in her disappointment.

"You must give us something else, Miss Laurens," said Mr. Harmon.

"I hoped to be excused," she replied.

"No, after waiting so long, we shan't accept excuses."

She selected a plaintive air, one she had once heard at an opera, and which made such an impression on her mind, that before she left the city she went to a music store and purchased it. Though naturally of a joyous temperament, to her

"The sweetest songs were those that tell of saddest thoughts."

Young as she was, her life had not been without its events which "woke the low murmurs of memory—

"Such as at twilight's silence come,
When, soft as birds their pinions closing,
The heart's best feelings gather home."

As she was about to begin the countess expressed in rather emphatic language how deeply disappointed she was, "in being obliged to forego the pleasure she anticipated," in hearing the magnificent piece of music she had suggested.

"As to songs and ballads, I don't care to listen to them," she said. "They make me think of the organ-grinders."

It required only a single stanza to show

that Cecilia and every line, even word, were intimately acquainted. The stream of small talk which set in, with its usual vivacity on such occasions, soon began to slacken, and before long ceased to flow. There was sweetness and pathos in the words of the song, and in the voice that sung them; while the notes of the instrument gave a true response. More than one was seen to furtively brush away a tear.

If, as has been said, Paganini's violin had a soul inside it, may not a piano have one, too; one into which the spirit of music breathes its delicious harmonies, unheard by our grosser senses, till waked by the touch of sympathetic and inspired fingers, the same as the violin yields its sweetness to the witchcraft of the master's hand that sweeps its strings?

The countess satisfied all who had an ear for music that she had none herself, though she evidently made an effort to conceal her indifference, rather impatience, during Cecilia's performance. She even went so far as to say to Mrs. Edgewell:

"Really, my dear madam, taking everything into consideration, your niece has done quite as well as could be expected for a beginner. Of course, it cannot be compared with the divine music I have been accustomed to hear."

"O no indeed," was the complaisant reply.

CHAPTER IV.

"CECILIA," said Mrs. Edgewell, the day after the party, "if we wish to cultivate the acquaintance of the countess and her nephew, we must follow Mrs. Hovedon's lead and give a party—one that will outshine hers."

"Well, as far as I am concerned, auntie, I can't say that I've the least wish to cultivate their acquaintance."

"You wouldn't say so if you had the least ambition. I have of late been convinced that you have a grovelling disposition, and there seems to be a mighty fine chance for it to develop, if you are so obstinate and self-willed as to refuse to comply with my wishes."

"I shall always obey your wishes, unless they are unreasonable."

"I dare say that in your estimation it is unreasonable to wish to give you a chance to become more intimately acquainted with

those two distinguished strangers who belong to the English aristocracy."

"As far as I am able to judge, this countess and baronet are very poor specimens of the gentry of England, or any other country. If the descriptions I've read of many of them are reliable, I can only say that they fall far below it. Were it otherwise, it would be a pleasure to see them even—and a much greater one to be allowed to cultivate their acquaintance."

"That is mere evasion. I am not so blind but that I can see how infatuated you are with that wonderful mechanic, known by the name of Julian Herbert. In your opinion he is the only real gentleman you have ever seen. My only hope is that the scales will soon fall from your eyes. At any rate, it may be well for you to understand that when you marry it must be to some one that I approve. Should you presume to encourage the addresses of that low fellow, I shall cut you off without a shilling."

"I've no wish to marry any one at present."

"Girls of your age are apt to change their minds."

"That is true, but I don't think that I shall."

"We shall see if the time should come, and I think it will, when you can choose between penury and a handsome young man belonging to the English nobility. Only think how well it would sound to be called Lady Cecilia."

"It might sound well enough, but the glory of the sound would, to me, be lost in the shame at the idea of being tied to a worthless coxcomb."

"We will let the matter drop for the present. It is of no use to try to reason with a headstrong girl who has no reason. One thing I'm determined on, and that is, my party shall in every respect be more stylish and magnificent than Mrs. Hovedon's. And remember that you are not to wear flowers, but jewels. You have beautiful hair, as you very well know, and I have decided that nothing will more attract attention to it than the aigrette of diamonds, with that lovely turquoise for its central gem, which your mother wore on her wedding-day."

"O auntie, don't ask me to wear that! The event with which it is associated makes it seem as something too sacred to

wear to a frivolous party for the sake of attracting attention."

"I am no sentimentalist. I have no sympathy with those who affect to have such ultra delicacy of feeling. You dressed to please yourself at Mrs. Hovedon's party; to mine you are to dress to please me."

While preparations were in progress, the countess condescended to make many suggestions, not only as to style and taste relative to dress, but what in the culinary department would, she said, be perfectly adapted to the occasion in Paris.

"I am naturally a good observer," said she, "and don't think it derogatory to cultivate my talent in whatever direction I choose. During my residence at the French metropolis, as my cook ranked with the very best employed by the nobility, I think you may accept my advice without hesitation. But in the onset, you will excuse me for hinting, that though economy is doubtless praiseworthy in many instances, this will not be a time to practise it."

"Certainly not," replied Mrs. Edgewell. "But I regret to say that Cecilia objects to wearing jewelry."

"Don't listen to the objections of a young inexperienced girl. Her beauty is of a kind which splendid jewelry will make perfectly ravishing—irresistible, I may say, to any gentleman of rank and refinement who appreciates feminine loveliness, and whose mind has not become stolid and dwarfed by constant hand labor."

"This remark makes me call to mind a young man who was at Mrs. Hovedon's party. He is rather good-looking, and persons unacquainted with his antecedents and his present position have actually mistaken him for a gentleman. Some, even, who have known him from his boyhood, think he appears like one; and what makes me feel very uncomfortable, among them is Cecilia, my niece."

"Is what you tell me possible? Did I not know that Mrs. Hovedon is grossly ignorant of what is due to the upper classes of society, I should not hesitate to say that it was an imposition, a gross indignity—insult would be the more appropriate word, to expose my nephew and myself, descendants in a direct line from William the Conqueror, to the chance of meeting one so low in the social scale. You, I find, have juster and more enlightened views of the matter, and will not, I am convinced, sub-

ject me and Sir Tancred to the ignominy of associating, even for a single evening, with those so far beneath us; and I may add, beneath yourself, Mrs. Edgewell."

"You may certainly depend upon me. I always advocated a greater degree of exclusiveness than is tolerated in this country."

CHAPTER V.

CECILIA had never looked more lovely than on the evening of the party. She could not help knowing this when she took a last look in the glass, to adjust a soft shining ringlet, which by some means had become slightly disarranged. She knew it, and was glad, for she was aware that Julian Herbert, whom alone she cared to please, had the eye of an artist, and hence could not fail to perceive the skill, harmony and adaptation with which the different articles and ornaments of her dress were suited one to the other.

A looker-on might imagine that no jewels owned in that region were that evening doomed to hide their splendor in a jewel-case, so brilliant was the flash of necklaces, bracelets, brooches, rings, tiaras, etc.

The countess was delighted, charmed; and Mrs. Edgewell's eyes beamed with intense satisfaction when she saw the baronet approach Cecilia and attempt to enter into conversation with her. She was, however, absent-minded, and some of her answers were irrelevant to the commonplaces uttered by the self-satisfied aristocrat. Her thoughts were, in truth, absorbed by one very different from him. She was watching for the arrival of Julian Herbert, and as he was one of those who avoid being late, was wondering what could so long detain him.

Time dragged heavily with her; the more so from being in common courtesy obliged to make a show of listening to the platitudes which were drawled lazily, one after the other, from the lips of the baronet. The principal theme of his talk was himself and "my aunt the countess," and his chief object to extol these two exalted personages. He gave her to understand that when in Europe they had the daily privilege of associating with the magnates of the land, among whom, as they there could find their level, they felt at home.

When, after a while, his attention was directed to Miss Bursley, the ruddiness of whose complexion was heightened by its reflex of her magnificent jewelry, Cecilia hastened to make the distance between them still greater. While intent on this purpose, she felt the pressure of a soft hand on her shoulder. She looked round and saw Susie Derwent.

"Cecilia," said she, "why wasn't Julian Herbert invited to your aunt's party?"

"He was invited. I saw all the cards, and his was among the rest."

"I saw him this afternoon, and he told me he shouldn't go to the party; so I supposed he wasn't invited."

"Did he assign any reason for absenting himself?"

"None whatever. Whom were the cards sent by?"

"Moxy, who can read writing as well as I can, and consequently wouldn't be likely to make a mistake."

"I think not. I have often observed that he is as literal as a Chinese in executing orders, and I have also noticed that in some instances he was 'cute' as a Yankee. I think it probable that Julian had some business to attend to which he couldn't put off."

"Perhaps so."

"I am sorry for two reasons that he isn't here. One is, that by his manly beauty and noble bearing he might again, as at Mrs. Hovedon's party, throw that disagreeable foppish baronet into the shade; the other, that he might see how much like some beautiful princess, such as I've read about, you look this evening. Soberly and sincerely, I never saw you look so handsome in my life."

"Nonsense. But Moxy has played the knave, I'm afraid; or," she added, mentally, "there may have been some underhand work by—well, I won't allow myself to even think by whom." But she could not so control herself as to prevent an angry flash from her eyes.

"As you look now," said Susie, "you recall to mind some lines of poetry I read this afternoon:

"Through light and shadow thou dost range,
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
Delicious spites, and darling angers,
And airy forms, of fitting change."

At this moment Cecilia caught sight of

the dark face of Moxy peering into an open window of a small ante-room. When he found that she saw him he made a quick emphatic sign, which she understood. The boy knew this, and stood aside so as not to be seen, while Cecilia, by slow degrees, lessened the distance between herself and the ante-room. On reaching it she entered and closed the door behind her. When she reached it, Moxy, without a word, handed her a letter, and then quickly disappeared. It was directed to herself, in the handwriting, as she saw by a glance, of Julian Herbert. She opened it and read:

"The card of invitation to the party this evening was duly received. It was my intention to accept it, but as I was about to leave my place of business a little earlier than usual, a sealed note was put into my hand. It was from your aunt, and requested me, as a great favor, not to attend the party. I think I understand the reason of this request. The baronet and 'my aunt the countess' have probably found out that I have more skill in constructing a mathematical instrument than I should have in following the hounds at a fox-hunt, by which I am so degraded in their opinion as to lose caste. All this would amuse me, were it not that I hoped to have an opportunity during the evening to name to you a few incidents which have come to my knowledge, and which seem to me to indicate that some evil design is on foot which will in some way involve you in its toils. If, after the guests have left, you can succeed in eluding the prying eyes of self-constituted spies, meet me at the foot of the garden, near the rosehedge. I cannot now be more explicit, as the messenger who will take this to you must not longer tarry.
J. H."

Cecilia, though much excited by this communication, by a strong effort of will so far controlled herself as to seem calm and self-possessed when she reentered the apartment from which she had been absent some ten or fifteen minutes. As the guests were constantly changing places, neither her absence nor her return was observed except by a few.

She quietly seated herself in a dim recess, her thoughts, in spite of herself, being full of the contents of the letter she had

been reading, when she was roused by a voice close by her side.

"A penny for your thoughts, Miss Laurens," it said.

"You would have a poor bargain; they are not worth a farthing," said Cecilia. And looking up, she saw the countess bending over her, with an eager singular look in her eyes, that caused a sudden shiver to pass through her frame.

"I am looking at your aigrette," said the countess. "It is perfectly splendid. But, my dear girl, do you know that the fastening has become loose, and that you are in momentary danger of losing it? By your leave, I will make it secure." And without waiting for Cecilia's leave, the fingers of the countess for a few moments moved nimbly among the delicious curls, adjusting the costly ornament.

Cecilia made a motion to raise her hand to her head, to assure herself by actual demonstration that the aigrette was firmly fastened, but at the same moment a small hand-mirror was held before her.

"Don't touch it," said the countess, deprecatingly. "If you do you will be sure to displace some of those beautiful curls, which a queen might be proud of, and which are now so arranged as to heighten the effect of the jewels, especially that of the turquoise—a gem as rare as your own beauty."

Cecilia turned aside, so as to avoid looking into the mirror, with an air of impatience she could not disguise.

"I am almost constrained to imagine that there is no one present whom you care to please."

"We may sometimes imagine what is true," replied Cecilia.

She rose as she spoke, for she saw the baronet making his way towards her, and in her present mood she felt that she might be tempted to betray the weariness she could not overcome, at his laudatory remarks respecting himself and "my aunt the countess," which he would probably make for her delectation. If she could only annihilate the time that must intervene between the present and the hour when the guests would take leave, during which she must compel herself to be self-possessed, appreciative and cheerful, what a relief it would be, she thought. The task was hard, but she performed it to the letter. She even succeeded in not show-

ing any signs of displeasure when she heard the countess, when about to take leave, tell Mrs. Edgewell that in her she had found a congenial spirit, and that she must not be surprised if she should drop in, almost any time of day, to have half an hour's chat with her.

"I should be so delighted to have you!" was Mrs. Edgewell's response. "And the baronet—he, too, I hope likes us well enough to let us see him frequently."

"Like is a cold tame word by which to express his emotions concerning one I will forbear to name, and which, out of deference to her shy reserve, he studiously forbears to manifest."

Meanwhile, Cecilia was hovering near the door by which she intended to make her egress, listlessly playing with some flowers that had been cast away by some one to fade alone, too heedless to be sentimental. She reached the door, and swept with her eye such places as were discernible. She could even see glimpses of the rosehedge in the distance, behind which, she did not doubt, was Julian Herbert, awaiting her.

"Will the parting words of the countess never come to an end?" thought Cecilia, whose suspense was fast amounting to agony.

At last the countess tore herself away, as she said, and in a few minutes the rattle of coach wheels, sweet as sweetest music to Cecilia's ears, told that the tiresome guest was on her way to her boarding-place, accompanied, no doubt, by her nephew. Cecilia left the house the moment her aunt went to her chamber, and, as she expected, found Julian Herbert waiting for her behind the rosehedge. A stolen meeting of two, who have interchanged hearts, if not vows, though sensible that their meeting would place them under the ban of one who demanded implicit obedience, may yet, for a single minute, awaken emotions of joy free from bitterness. It was thus with Julian and Cecilia; but the star of love shining over them, with light so bright and pure, could not dissipate the cloud of doubt, suspicion and threatening danger which hung over them, and made their meeting imperative.

"I believe," said Julian, "that, instead of a baronet, we have a burglar in our midst, and that the so-called countess is a receiver of stolen goods. I think I hold a

clue which, if followed up, will prove whether I am right or wrong in my belief."

He then told her that when in the city of New York, about a week previous, he entered a restaurant about eight o'clock in the evening. At the moment of his entrance two men rose from a table. One of them made for the door; the other, hastily gathering up a letter and a few bits of paper, thrust them into his pocket, his comrade, meanwhile, crying out to him to hurry, or they should be too late.

"I could not see his face, but his voice was the same as the baronet's, whom the self-constituted aristocracy of our quiet pleasant town are exerting themselves to honor by the splendor of their entertainments. I obtained a view of the other's countenance as he left the apartment, and a most villanous one it was, its expression of vileness being intensified by an ugly scar on his cheek.

"As I drew near the table I saw that in his hurry to leave he had overlooked a piece of paper, folded as a torch for a cigar-lighter, which, by being shoved under the edge of a plate, was nearly concealed. I seated myself in the chair he had just vacated, and taking up the paper torch, carelessly played with it while the refreshments I had ordered were placed on the table. It was some time after I had finished my meal before there was opportunity to read, unobserved, what was written on the piece of paper; though by a few words I glanced at as I took it up, my curiosity was much excited. I found that many of the words were torn off, others mutilated, but enough could be made out to cause not only curiosity, but anxiety. One sentence remained unbroken. It said, 'I tell you, comrades, as we used to hear said when our vocation led us to the oil region, "I've struck oil;" or, to speak after the manner of gold seekers, I've struck a rich vein, inasmuch as the gold is already coined and set with jewels.' What followed was much of it gone, but something about diamonds and other jewelry, a handsome face and a marplot, could be made out. Then came a few lines more legible, in which mention was made of the facility with which wool could be pulled over the eyes of certain persons who aspired to the honor of the acquaintance of the countess and baronet, and the longing and the ready gullibility they manifested relative to obtaining a

slice of the green cheese cut from the moon.

"Allusion was likewise made to some one who, though young, was so shrewd and keen-witted that she would be likely to detect some discrepancy in their plot, however skillfully woven, and that consequently her abduction, if it could be safely accomplished, was a consummation devoutly to be wished. 'A consultation,' it said, 'must therefore be held before anything definite is decided on; for which purpose we will meet together at the old rendezvous, one week after —' Here the information was abruptly ended, the remainder of the paper being entirely gone. To ascertain the time and place of the proposed meeting is now the desideratum. Could this be done, I might, at least, take measures by which to determine if my suspicions are well founded relative to the parties concerned. As the matter stands, silence, caution and watchfulness on our part are all that can be done. For myself, I've no doubt that Sir Tancred, as he calls himself, is at the head of a gang of thieves."

"I hope he will not steal my beautiful aigrette. I wore it this evening, and the countess noticed it particularly, and was eloquent in her praises concerning it. I think you can see some gleams of it by the light of the stars, they shine so brightly." And as she spoke, raising her hand to indicate the place where he must look, she found it was gone.

"You said the countess noticed and praised it?"

"Yes, and was so kind—finding that the clasp had become loose—to fasten it more firmly."

"Now, I suspect that, instead of fastening it, she unfastened it, and left it in a condition to enable her, at any moment, to take possession of it. Sleight of hand is a great accomplishment among the class I think she belongs to. I have from the first disliked her."

"So have I; but I won't allow myself to believe that she is guilty of crime like that, unless, after making a thorough search for it, and employing every other available means, I fail to find it. It was my mother's, and for that reason I would not exchange it for one of many times its intrinsic value."

"If your search proves successful, I shall be glad; but I have little hope that it will.

This baronet, I have no doubt, is at the head of a band of robbers, and the countess is in league with them. If a specimen of the scoundrel's handwriting could be obtained, 'twould be something tangible. A sameness of voices caused me to suspect him; but that, without the evidence, would not prove his identity."

"As according to the agreement I heard made between my aunt and the countess, for herself and nephew to be on such familiar terms as to call at any time of day—that is, have the run of the house for the future till they leave town—some of the baronet's handwriting may fall in my way."

"So they are to come and go according to their own will and pleasure?"

"Yes. 'It will seem so homelike,' the countess said. Aunt Edgewell seemed delighted with the arrangement. To be on such intimate terms with persons belonging to the English nobility is a consummation devoutly to be wished, though one she hardly dared to aspire to."

"Mrs. Edgewell is a monomaniac on that subject; but her infirmity may be instrumental in either proving or disproving the high pretensions of those she so delights to honor. But I have kept you out in the damp night air too long. Be watchful and vigilant, and I will be the same; for, as the poet says:

"The important business
The tide whereof is now."

CHAPTER VI.

In the morning Cecilia searched every possible and impossible place for the lost aigrette, but without success. She and her aunt were bemoaning its loss, when the countess appeared at the door with a smiling countenance, holding her left hand behind her.

"Have you lost anything, Miss Laurens?" she asked.

"Yes, I have lost my aigrette."

"And I have found it."

"Where?"

"Near the doorstep, half concealed among those beautiful dahlias." And taking her hand from behind her, where, unnoticed, she had held it, she handed it to Cecilia, whose countenance at sight of it beamed with gratitude and joy.

"How fortunate it is," said Mrs. Edgewell, "that it fell into honest hands. Its value and beauty might have tempted some who pass for honest people to keep it."

"Without taking any praise to myself, I must say that you think the same as I do. This lovely turquoise might almost tempt an anchorite to be dishonest."

"I am more thankful," said Cecilia, "than I have words to express; and I shan't forget that it is to you I owe its restoration."

Cecilia was bitter in her self-condemnation at having suspected that the countess could have been guilty of stealing the jewelry. It was with difficulty that she forbore to confess her suspicion, and ask forgiveness. She was restrained by the reflection that Julian Herbert might not think it the most judicious method of proceeding. It would be better to send him a note to disabuse him of the false idea she had been the means of infusing into his mind concerning the loss of the aigrette. She wrote the note without delay, and sent it by Moxey, who, in return, brought her a business-card, on the back of which was written:

"Don't hanker after a slice of that green cheese the moon is made of, nor suffer wool to be pulled over your eyes, though of the finest and most delicate staple."

At first Cecilia was puzzled; then she remembered what was said of this same green cheese and wool-pulling on the piece of paper intended for a cigar-lighter.

"Julian thinks there may be tactics in theft, as well as in war, and that vigilance must be our watchword still," was her mental soliloquy.

Some hours later Cecilia received a message from her aunt, requesting her to come to her. She was surprised to see the countess there, and still more so, when she saw her aunt's jewels lying on the table by which they sat. Her surprise was not diminished when the countess rose, and with much warmth embraced her.

"My sweet young lady," said she, "your aunt and I have been planning an entertainment, but we wouldn't proceed a step further without the benefit of your good taste. Such guests as please to do so, are to appear in costume, and even wear masks. As you are to personate an eastern princess, you must be adorned with costly

jewels. Your aunt's diamond necklace, her bracelets and rings, not forgetting the lovely aigrette I was so happy as to restore to you, together with other jewels I've seen you wear, will be indispensable."

"It seems to me that I shall look quite overloaded with jewelry."

"O no. Oriental princesses wear *such* a profusion of precious gems. It is one of their customs, and any one who would sustain the character of a princess, in a manner to make it natural and effective, must do the same."

"You said something about wearing masks—must I wear one?"

"By no means. While the jewels will be a set-off to your beauty, your charming face will be a set-off to them."

Cecilia's first impulse was to reject the proposition unconditionally; but a good genie whispered something in her ear, which caused her to change her mind, and call into requisition what may be termed a kind of courteous diplomacy, assumed to ward off apprehended evil. She was thus inspired to "wear her face to the bent" of what she saw expressed in that of the countess. They were, in truth, mutually trying to read each other; but the purer moral atmosphere which Cecilia breathed made her perception clearer, quicker and more delicate than the other's, the circumstances of whose longer life had more than once involved her in the meshes of intrigue, from which it was difficult to extricate herself without pressing closely on the footsteps of crime. She had thus been rendered hard and callous. She could not understand the finer points of emotional character, whose crown

"Is made of love and friendship, and sits high
Upon the forehead of humanity,"

like a star whose light scintillates and blends with the radiance of another star. The love of Julian Herbert for Cecilia was to her comprehension too unobtrusive to be regarded as such.

When they met at the rosehedge Julian's fears being quickened by fears on Cecilia's account, he made suggestions which she now recalled to mind, making her watchful and cautious during the present interview, and awakened a new suspicion of a woman so lavish of her praises and her flatteries. Was she not weaving a snare for her? was the question she asked herself.

The countess, whose bloom of heart had vanished many long years before the bloom of her youth was gone, was so elated at Cecilia's showing so little opposition to her wishes as to be exultant—almost hilarious. She laughed, gesticulated, and used many highflown expressions. Her scale of ethics was in truth so low as to make her incapable of analyzing, or even comprehending the higher moralities. She took no note of the lack of heartiness with which Cecilia acceded to the proposition relative to her personating an Eastern princess, or the dreamy look in her eyes, which seemed to be looking beyond the present. The countess, like Macbeth, when plotting mischief against Duncan, thought, as they intended to have a party,

"Then 'twere well
It were done quickly."

"Wont the people around here," said she, "gape and wonder when they see what skill and science can do in the arrangement of diamonds and other jewels, so as to make them effective? I have made the arrangement of jewels a study, and know how to place each one so as to be complementary to another. Yes, my dear Mrs. Edgewell, this party will be an epoch in your life. Its memory will be immortal. It will be handed down from one generation to another, as the party given by the rich and distinguished Mrs. Edgewell, in honor of the eighteenth birthday of her niece, Miss Cecilia Laurens, the most beautiful and accomplished young lady of her time."

It was only by stealth that Cecilia succeeded in writing and sending a note to Julian, giving him a brief programme of the anticipated party. She closed by asking his advice as to whether he thought she had better personate the Eastern princess, or, by some plausible pretext, ask to be excused. In answer, she received as follows:

"Be a princess, by all means; and as masks are to be the order of the evening to a limited extent, I may be there to see, although your aunt will not, of course, invite me, as I am, in her estimation, too far beneath her noble guests to be admitted on terms of equality."

Just as Cecilia came back to the room, she having seen Moxey from a window when he returned from his errand to Julian, and rightly supposing he would bring an answer to her note, had ventured to leave

for a few minutes, the countess rose hurriedly, and said she must go, as she had many calls to make.

"I shall," she said, "return by eight o'clock this evening, and with your help and concurrence go more into detail relative to dress and other things."

CHAPTER VII.

THE countess was as good as her word. She came at the appointed hour, with a package in her hand.

"I wouldn't trust anybody but myself with this," she said; "not even my nephew the baronet, lest a fit of carelessness or forgetfulness should come over him. I would not breathe what this paper contains even to your pet canary; so we three must go to your own private apartment before I let you into the secret—that is, if you are willing, my dear Mrs. Edgewell."

"To be sure I am."

"King James the 1st, I once heard a gentleman say, had a place he called his ear, where he could overhear even a whisper in a contiguous apartment. I hope your room hasn't such an ear," said the countess, as they entered the chamber, and Cecilia closed the door.

"No, it has neither ear, eye nor tongue."

"I didn't think it had. What I said was only in sport," replied the countess, taking from the package a jewel-case, and displaying its contents.

"Why, here is Miss Bursley's diamond necklace!" said Mrs. Edgewell. "I should know it anywhere as well as I do my own."

"You are right. She sent that and all her jewels to our dear Cecilia. Pardon me, if I address you in a manner too familiar. It is a weakness of mine to speak familiarly to those I've learned to love."

"Sent all her jewels to me, did you say?" asked Cecilia.

"Certainly I did. When I told her that you were to represent an Eastern princess, which would prove a failure unless some one would have the benevolence to lend you some diamonds and other costly gems, suggesting at the same time that, in my own mind, I had selected her to fill the place of your duenna—(an indispensable character, who must dress very plainly)—she offered them voluntarily, and would take no denial."

"Miss Bursley is very kind," said Cecilia, "but I cannot accept her offer."

"Not accept it? You surprise me. I see no reason why you cannot."

"I should be afraid that some accident might happen to them, or I might lose some of them in the crowd."

"Remember that as a princess, you wont mingle with the crowd, but will sit in a chair of state on a dais."

"I have still another objection. If I am bedizzened with so much jewelry, while everybody knows that I've but little of my own, they may imagine I have been robbing some chandelier of its sparkling pendants; or that, prompted by a desire to be useful, I had undertaken to supply the place of one."

"How many conceits and quibbles the dear girl has in that pretty head of hers!" said the countess.

"Yes," said Mrs. Edgewell, with asperity; "and I should advise her to keep them there, to use on some more appropriate occasion, and not tease those with them who just now have so much to attend to."

"O, let her show off her little make-believe petulances. She don't mean to tease us. She is too amiable for that."

"Please don't be too certain of my amiability."

"Never mind—I'll bring her round," said the countess aside, in a low voice. "We must think of something else now, and not spend all our time talking about jewels. There are other things equally important to discuss, which can be so planned with your cooperation and my nephew's, as to make the party as successful as I have already predicted."

Cecilia by care and watchfulness, and Moxy's devoted loyalty, succeeded in keeping Julian Herbert advised of whatever she herself knew. There was many a crafty and apparently skillful movement on the part of the countess, who was the real wire-puller, detected, which by some counter movement on the part of Julian would be likely to result in defeat.

Time and the preparations went steadily on, and the evening for the party duly arrived. By the aid of the scientific knowledge of the countess, as may be supposed, relative to the arrangement of jewelry, Miss Bursley's necklace, bracelets, etc., were made to do duty in a manner very

effective. So thought Mrs. Edgewell, though so travestied, remarked Cecilia, that even a Yankee could not guess for what they were originally intended. Despoiled of her jewels, and in the plain dress which the countess said was proper for a duenna, Miss Bursley who came early was evidently downcast and unhappy, emotions which grew more vivid and emphatic, when she discovered, that instead of being worn as a whole, portions of her necklace had been detached and distributed in different places of Cecilia's dress.

The countess and her nephew were enchanted at the magnificence of Cecilia's appearance.

"Come, my pet," said the countess, "and look at yourself in the pier-glass, and tell us what you think of yourself."

"I imagine," replied Cecilia, "judging by the description I once read of an East India idol, who like me was loaded down with jewels, and as a protection I suppose against light-fingered gentry, was kept in a pagoda, that being in keeping with the character, I ought to have the benefit of one, too."

"I have no patience with you," said her aunt. "You might as well have said that you are in danger of thieves and pickpockets. If the countess thinks what you say is worth minding, she must imagine that we Americans are exceedingly choicer in the selection of our guests."

"O," said the countess, "I know how to take her. The exuberance of her spirits makes her too full of fun and frolic to be toned down to the sober demeanor proper for you and me."

This was what she said, though Cecilia's allusion had given impulse to a slight undercurrent of uneasiness that she could not fully overcome.

The guests began now to assemble in greater numbers. It was not long before a party of men entered, attired in fantastic costumes, all of whom wore masks. As Julian was to wear a mask, Cecilia scanned them with a keen eye. But the form and bearing of each were so totally different from his that she soon became convinced that he was not of their number.

Soon afterward a larger party of maskers arrived. One had long flowing locks white as snow, and a beard, venerable for its length and hue. Over his shoulder hung one of those peculiarly shaped harps of the olden time, whose inspiring lays gave the

wandering minstrels of Erin a welcome to the homes of both rich and poor. His general appearance realized Cecilia's ideal of an inspired harper of Ossian. As he stood a little apart, displaying to advantage his noble symmetrical figure and easy grace of motion, a certain turn of his head convinced her of what she had from the first suspected. She was certain that the harper was no other than Julian Herbert.

After a while Cecilia became very weary of sitting like a statue on exhibition in her chair of state, and notwithstanding the strict prohibition of the countess, decided to disobey her and leave it the first opportunity. Miss Bursley, who was told that she must sit so as to keep her eye on her charge, being of a less active temperament, took a journey to the land of Nod, and was comforted by dreaming that diamond necklaces hung on the bushes thick as blackberries, so that she could in the place of her own disjointed one obtain as many as she pleased, which were far more splendid.

Julian had been absent from the room half an hour, or more. Haunted by vague half-formed fears of impending evil, Cecilia undertook to divert her thoughts by watching the different persons moving about, each possessing individuality of form, locomotion, features and voices. This speculative mood recalled what she had recently read in the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," where the Professor says: "The soul of a man has a series of concentric envelopes round it like the core of an onion, or the innermost of a nest of boxes."

Among others she noticed her friend, Susie Derwent. In her soul she felt certain that there were roots which nourished flowers of benevolence, kindness and love, making the home atmosphere of herself and others redolent with sweetness.

Then there was the countess going hither and thither like a troubled spirit from Tartarus. Though evidently trying to appear composed, she could not banish the unnatural glow that burnt on her cheeks, nor the fiery sparkle of her eyes, save that they were now and then dimmed by a shade of apprehension.

What of her? Cecilia, as she turned away from the picture her imagination had painted, remembered that the countess, though she and Julian had suspected her of taking it, returned the lost aigrette which she found among the dahlias. When

she thought of this, conscience whispered, "Judge not lest ye be judged."

At last she determined to break her hateful bondage, when Moxy in the character of a harlequin, lightly ascended the steps of the dais, and approaching her knelt before her, and with great solemnity handed her a bunch of marigolds.

"The aristocracy," said he, "will laugh at my nosegay and call it mean and vulgar, and now that they have loaded you with jewels would gladly turn you—not like Lot's wife into a pillar of salt—but a column of gold."

He looked her in the eye as he said this, adding in a low whisper, "Examine the middle flower."

Cecilia soon had opportunity to do so, and found crowded into the calyx of the flower a small tightly-rolled bit of paper on which was written:

"I can see that you are restless, but stay where you are till I have opportunity to tell you what we must do."

Now that Cecilia, who knew the message was from Julian, found that she had something to wait for, though she was much excited, she remained where she was. As the midnight hour drew nigh, she saw the baronet gliding stealthily from one to another of those, who in fantastic costumes and wearing masks, were the first to arrive. He spoke a few words to each of them. They apparently in a careless manner, said something in return, and soon afterward quietly grouped themselves together, while they so managed as to gradually get nearer the door. Meanwhile there was something in the appearance of the countess which betrayed watchfulness and much anxiety.

At this moment Cecilia's heart gave a sudden bound, for she saw the harper making his way toward the dais. He stopped opposite to her, and with a low almost reverent bow, yet free from servility, he said:

"I will, with your gracious permission, as the minstrels of old were wont to do, sing you a few lines to the music of my harp."

"It would be doing me too much honor," she replied. "Yet I cannot deny myself the pleasure of hearing you."

First playing a

"prelude fashioning the way
In which his voice should wander,"

he sang in deep tones a wild eerie air,

adapted to the following lines of Coleridge's Christabel.

"'Tis the middle of night by the castle-clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock:
Tu-whit-tu-whoo!
And hark again! The crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek.
Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jean Maria, shield her well."

While the last note still vibrated on the air, Julian Herbert sprang upon the dais, and casting his harp aside, took Cecilia by the hand. In a moment all was confusion. High above the deafening din and clatter, the shrill voice of the countess rang through the apartments, calling loudly on the baronet, and exhorting those present by all they held dear to rescue the innocent girl from the clutches of that vile harper and horrid desperado. As some of the gentlemen present were about to comply with this earnest request, Julian threw off his mask and divested himself of his snowy locks and beard.

"Madame," said he, "the baronet no doubt would gladly obey your call, were it not, that while making certain necessary arrangements for the abduction of this lady by my side, he and his associates were arrested and are now in custody. The same carriage provided for the conveyance of Miss Laurens to a place where she could be safely rifled of her jewels, will serve to convey them to the city, where, as it is to be hoped, they will in due time be equitably dealt by. As to you, madame, you can have the privilege of remaining where you are till morning."

"Gentlemen," said the countess, assuming a lofty scornful air, "can you have the credulity to believe what he asserts, he who is so low and mean that he has no reputation to lose, or save, and yet has the audacity to implicate those of noble descent?"

"We can have," said Mr. Harmon, "if believing that Julian Herbert is a man of unimpeachable reputation is credulity."

"We agree with you, Mr. Harmon," was said by many voices.

"I may at least count on your sympathy and aid," said the countess, addressing Mrs. Edgewell.

"I am sorry for you, of course," was the

reply, "but you can see yourself that I have no power to aid you."

"Most of this is a mystery to us," said Mr. Harmon. "Will you enlighten us?" turning to Julian.

"I will. A few incidents came to my knowledge which puzzled me, and made me think that this woman, and the young man who calls her 'aunt,' were not what they represented themselves to be. I made a detective of myself, and succeeded in tracing a chain of events, each trifling in itself, which heightened my suspicions, and at last confirmed them, though I could produce no proof that would stand in law. I took measures to ascertain their antecedents, but received no answer until this evening, when just as I had made ready for the party a letter was brought me from the post-office. By this I learn that the woman who professes to be of noble lineage, was in her more youthful days lady's maid in different English families, and that finally she was engaged by a lady of wealth and distinction as reader and companion. After serving several years in this capacity, she was obliged to leave suddenly and secretly, to avoid being arrested for stealing jewelry and other valuable articles to the amount of one thousand pounds. She was instigated to do this, it was thought, by a man of some personal attractions, several years younger than herself, who was the family coachman. They escaped together, crossed the channel, and thence by means of forged passports came to the United States. We all know how they imposed on the good people of this place. By some things that have transpired, there is reason to suppose that they were engaged in the series of robberies in and about this region, the extent of which those who lost silver plate know more than I do."

"At any rate," said Mr. Harmon, "it must be admitted that the diamonds and other costly jewelry belonging to the ladies

were collected by the self-termed countess, in a manner so unique and so crafty, as to make her worthy of being called, if not a countess, a Queen of Thieves."

"I think it right," said Julian, "to add to what I've already mentioned, that Miss Laurens was induced to submit to being made ridiculous, by inklings of what might have ultimated in success had it not been frustrated."

The mind of Mrs. Edgewell, during this time, underwent a great and rapid change. She had always treated Cecilia's assertion with contempt, of being able

"To read the mind's construction in the face,"

by watching its emotional phases; but she now began to realize that she had suffered herself to be so hoodwinked by her aspirations for rank and show, as to make her incapable of discerning the difference between the false and the true. Her hobby of exclusiveness was changed into a hippogriff, which, spreading its wings, flew away as she looked at the crestfallen, whilom countess, and then at Julian Herbert, who as with his usual unpretending air he stood before them, presented

"A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man."

"I have been self-willed, and, molelike, worked in the dark," said Mrs. Edgewell, "and I must try to make amends for what I did. I therefore intend that my next party shall be a wedding party—that is, if I'm so fortunate as to gain the consent of the young couple, which I think there's a tolerably fair prospect of my doing. I imagine that none of you will attend, when I tell you that my niece, Cecilia Laurens, will be the bride—not as I foolishly anticipated, of a baronet—but of our young townsman, Julian Herbert, who, skillful in constructing a machine, has shown himself equally so in demolishing a plot."

THE FATAL GLOVE:

—OR,—

THE HISTORY OF A STREET-SWEEPER.

IN FOUR PARTS.

BY CLARA AUGUSTA.

PART I.—[CONTINUED.]

Mr. Linnere played and sang with exquisite taste and skill—he was a complete master of the art, and, in spite of herself, Margie listened to him with a delight which was almost fascination, but which subsided the moment the melody ceased.

He judged her by the majority of women he had met, and finding her indifferent, he sought to rouse her jealousy by flirting with Miss Lee, who was by no means averse to his attentions. But Margie hailed the transfer with a relief which was so evident that Mr. Linnere, piqued and irritated, took up his hat to leave, in the midst of one of Miss Lee's most brilliant descriptions of what she had seen in Italy, from whence she had but just returned. He went over to the sofa where Margie was sitting.

"I hope to please you better next time," he said, lifting her hand. "Good-night, Margie, dear." And before she was aware, he touched his lips to her forehead. She tore her hand away from him, and a flush of anger sprang to her cheek. He surveyed her with admiration. He liked a little spirit in a woman, especially as he intended to be able to subdue it when it pleased him. Her anger made her a thousand times more beautiful. He stood looking at her a moment, then turned and withdrew.

Margie struck her forehead with her hand, as if she would wipe out the touch he had left there.

"It burns like fire," she muttered. "O heaven! am I to become the wife of that man? Will God permit it? Is it my duty?"

Alexandrine came and put her arm around her waist.

"I almost envy you, Margie," she said, in that singularly purring voice of hers.

"Ah, Linnere is magnificent! Such eyes, and hair, and such a voice! Well, Margie, you are a fortunate girl."

And Miss Lee sighed, and shook out the heavy folds of her violet silk, with the air of one who has been injured, but is determined to show a proper spirit of resignation.

Mr. Paul Linnere hurried along through an unfrequented street to his suite of rooms at the St. Nicholas. He was very angry with everybody; he felt like an ill-treated individual. He had expected Margie to fall at his feet at once. A man of his attractions to be snubbed as he had been! by a mere chit of a girl, too! He, with whom a duchess had once been in love!

"I will find means to tame her, when once she is mine," he muttered. "By heaven! but it will be rare sport to break that fiery spirit! It will make me young again!"

Something white and shadowy bound his path. A spectral hand was laid on his arm, chilling like ice, even through his clothing. The ghastly face of a woman—a face framed in jet black hair, and lit up by great black eyes bright as stars, gleamed through the mirk of the night.

The man gazed into the weird face, and shook like a leaf in the blast. His arm sank nerveless to his side, palsied by that frozen touch, his voice was so unnatural that he started at the sound.

"My God! Arabel Vere! Do the dead come back?"

The great unnaturally brilliant eyes seemed to burn into his brain. The cold hand tightened on his arm. A breath like wind freighted with snow crossed his face.

"Speak, for heaven's sake!" he cried. "Am I dreaming?"

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"Remember the banks of the Seine!" said a singularly sweet voice, which sounded to Mr. Paul Linnere as if it came from leagues and leagues away. "When you sit by the side of the living love, remember the dead! Think of the dark rolling river, and of what its waters covered!"

He started from the strange presence, and caught at a post for support. His self-possession was gone; he trembled like the most abject coward. Only for a moment—and then, when he looked again, the apparition had vanished. All was silent save the distant clock of St. Stephens, striking twelve. Not so much as the sound of a footfall, to tell him that his visitor had been mortal.

"Good God!" he cried, putting his hand to his forehead. "Do the dead indeed come back! I saw them take her from the river—O heaven! I saw her when she sank beneath the terrible waters! Is there a hereafter, and does a man sell his soul to damnation who commits what the world calls murder?"

He stopped under a lamp and drew out his pocket-book, taking therefrom a soiled scrap of paper.

"Yes, I have it here. 'Found drowned, the body of a woman. Her linen was marked with the name of Arabel Vere. Another unfortunate—' No, I will not read the rest. I have read it too often, now, for my peace of mind. Yes, she is dead. There is no doubt. I have been dreaming to-night. Old Trevlyn's wine was too strong for me. Arabel Vere, indeed! Pshaw! Paul Linnere, are you an idiot?"

Not daring to cast a look behind him, he hurried home, and up to his spacious parlor on the second floor. Everything that money could purchase was there. From the wreck of his fortune Linnere had saved all that was valuable in the way of costly trinkets and rare curiosities. He had a penchant for such things.

The velvet carpet was so thick that it gave back no echo from the heaviest footfall, and its roses and lilies looked like those which grow in living gardens. You felt almost tempted to stop and inhale their fragrance. The chairs and sofas were curiously wrought by the fair fingers of the Persian women, and were soft as Turkish divans. A deep voluptuous rose color pervaded the gold-embossed wall-paper, and

lingered in the silver hangings, giving to the atmosphere the mellowness of summer, and making the marble Psyche blush at her own loveliness. Bronzes, rare and exquisite, loaded the fanciful brackets, a goldfinch was asleep in a gilded cage, with his head beneath his wing, and on the hearthrug a slender greyhound was dozing the time away, with half-shut eyes.

Linnere turned up the gas into a flare, and, throwing off his coat, flung himself into an armchair, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. He looked about the room with half-frightened searching eyes. He dreaded solitude, and he feared company, yet felt the necessity of speaking to something. His eyes lighted on the dog.

"Leo, Leo," he called, "come here, sir!"

The dog opened his eyes, but gave no responsive wag of his tail. You saw at once that though Leo was Mr. Paul Linnere's property, and lived with him, he did not have any attachment for him.

"Come here, sir!" said Linnere, authoritatively.

Still the animal did not stir. Linnere was nervous enough to be excited to anger by the veriest trifle, and the dog's disobedience aroused his rage.

"Curse the brute!" he cried. And putting his foot against him, he sent him spinning across the room. Leo did not growl, or cry out, but his eyes gleamed like coals, and he showed his white teeth with savage but impotent hatred. It was easy to see that if he had been a bulluog instead of a greyhound, he would have torn Mr. Paul Linnere limb from limb.

Linnere went back to his chair, and sat down with a sullen face; but he could not rest there. He tried the sofa, and then an ottoman by the open window. He rose, and going into an inner room, brought out an ebony box, which he opened, and from which he took a miniature in a golden case. He hesitated a moment before touching the spring, and when he did so the unclosing revealed the face of a young girl. Linnere's countenance changed singularly at sight of that face. He dropped the locket, and covered his eyes with his hands. Leo crept up to his feet, and caressed the locket, uttering a pitiful whine which arrested the attention of his master. Linnere snatched up the locket, and looked on the pictured face.

A fair young girl in her early youth—not more than eighteen summers could have scattered their roses over her, when that beautiful impression was taken. A ripe southern face, with masses of jet-black hair, and dark brilliant eyes. There was a dewy crimson on her lips, and her cheeks were red as damask roses. A bright happy face, upon which no blight had fallen.

"She was beautiful—beautiful as a houri!" said Mr. Paul Linmere, speaking slowly, half unconsciously, it seemed, his thoughts aloud. "And when I first knew her, she was sweet and innocent. I made her sin. I led her into the temptation she was too weak to resist. Women are soft and silly when they are in love, and because of that, men have to bear all the blame. She was willing to trust me—she ought to have been more cautious. Who blames me, if I tired of her? A man does not always want a moping complaining woman hanging about him! and she had a deuced unpleasant way of forcing herself upon me when it was particularly disagreeable to have her do so. Well—but there is no use in retrospection. I had strong objections to being called father when there were such brilliant prospects for me in another quarter. She was drowned—she and her unborn child, and the dead never come back—no, never!"

He shuddered as he spoke, and looked half-fearfully, half-expectantly around him. He felt as if he were not alone in the room. Some unseen presence oppressed him with vague dread. He seemed to feel that cold hand on his arm, and again that icy breath swept across his face. He sprang up and rang the bell sharply. Directly his valet, Pietro, a sleepy-looking and swarthy Italian, appeared.

"Bring me a glass of brandy, Pietro; and look you, sir, you may sleep to-night on the lounge in my room. I am not feeling quite well, and may have need of you before morning."

The man looked surprised, but made no comment. He brought the stimulant, his master drank it off, and then threw himself, dressed as he was, on the bed.

Upper Tendon was ringing with the approaching nuptials of Miss Harrison and Mr. Linmere. The bride was so beautiful, so wealthy, and so insensible to her good fortune in securing the most eligible man

in her set. Half the ladies in the city were in love with Mr. Linmere. He was so *distingue*, carried himself so loftily, and yet was so gallantly condescending, and so imitably fascinating. He knew Europe like a book, sang like a professor, and knew just how to hand a lady her fan, adjust her shawl, and take her from a carriage. Accomplishments which make men popular, always.

Early in July Mr. Trevlyn and Margie, accompanied by a gay party, went down to Cape May. Mr. Trevlyn had long ago sworn everything of the kind; but since Margie Harrison had come to reside with him he had given up his hermit habits, and been quite like other nice gouty old gentlemen. He was fretful and overbearing at times, and liked his own way on all occasions; but he did a great deal to make Margie happy in her new home, and bore patiently with the troops of gay young people she gathered around her. He might not so far have come out of his retirement as to have visited a fashionable watering-place, had not his physician prescribed sea-bathing; and Mr. Trevlyn had too great a dread of death to disregard the first symptoms of disease.

The party went down on Thursday—Mr. Paul Linmere followed on Saturday. Margie had hoped he would not come; in his absence she could have enjoyed the sojourn, but his presence destroyed for her all the charms of sea and sky. She grew frightened, sometimes, when she thought how intensely she hated him. And in October she was to become his wife. So it was arranged. Mr. Linmere knew that there was truth in the old proverb, and did not mean the cup should slip before it reached his lips. His creditors were importunate, and it would not do to wait too long.

Some way, Margie felt strangely at ease on the subject. She knew that the arrangements were all made, that her wedding *trousseau* was being got up by a fashionable *modiste*, that Delmonico had received orders for the feast, and that the oranges were budded which, when burst into flowers were to adorn her forehead on her bridal day. She despised Linmere with her whole soul, she dreaded him inexpressibly, yet she scarcely gave her approaching marriage with him a single thought. She wondered that she did not; when she thought of it

at all, she was shocked to find herself so impassive. She could not have a heart like other women, she thought, or she should have it manifesting itself.

Her party had been a week at Cape May, when Archer Trevlyn came down, with the wife of his employer, Mr. Belgrade. The lady was in delicate health, and had been advised to try sea air and surf-bathing. Mr. Belgrade's business would not allow of his absence at just that time, and he had shown his confidence in his head clerk by selecting him as his wife's escort.

Introduced into society by so well-established an aristocrat as Mrs. Belgrade, Arch might, at once, have taken a prominent place among the fashionables; for his singularly handsome face and highbred manners made him an acquisition to any company. But he never forgot that he had been a street-sweeper, and he would not submit to be patronized by the very people who had once, perhaps, grudged him the pennies they had thrown to him as they would have thrown bread to a starving dog. So he avoided society, and attended only on Mrs. Belgrade. But from Alexandrine Lee he could not escape. She fastened upon him at once. She had a habit of singling out gentlemen, and giving them the distinction of her attentions, and no one thought of noticing it, now. The nine days' wonder at her eccentricities had long been a thing of the past. Arch was ill at ease beneath the infliction, but he was a thorough gentleman, and could not repulse her rudely.

A few days after the arrival of Mrs. Belgrade, Arch took her down to the beach to bathe. All the world was out. The beach was alive with the gorgeous grotesque figures of the bathers. The air was bracing, the surf splendid.

Mr. Trevlyn's carriage drove down soon after Mrs. Belgrade had finished her morning's "dip;" and Margie and Mr. Linmere, accompanied by Alexandrine Lee, alighted. They were in bathing costume, and Miss Lee, espying Arch, fastened upon him without ceremony.

"O Mr. Trevlyn," she said, animatedly, "I am so glad to have come across you! I was just telling Mr. Linmere that two ladies were hardly safe with only one gentleman, in such a surf as there is this morning. I shall have to depend on you to take care of me. Shall I?"

Of course, Arch could not refuse; and apologizing to Mrs. Belgrade, who good-naturedly urged him forward, he took charge of Miss Lee.

Linmere offered Margie his hand to lead her in, but she declined. He kept close beside her, and when they stood waist deep in the water, and a huge breaker was approaching, he put his arm around her shoulders. With an impatient gesture she tore herself away. He made an effort to retain her, and in the struggle Margie lost her footing, and the receding wave bore her out to sea!

Linmere grew pale as death. He was so susceptible, dear man! the ladies said, looking on in pity and horror. Yes, he *was* susceptible. He knew if Margie was drowned, he was a ruined man! His pictures and statues would have to go under the hammer—his creditors were only kept from striking by his prospect of getting a rich wife to pay his debts. He cast an imploring eye on the swimmers around him, but he was too great a coward to risk his life among the swirling breakers.

Only one man struck boldly out to the rescue. Arch Trevlyn threw off the clinging hand of Miss Lee, and with a strong arm pressed his way through the white-capped billows. He came near to Margie, he saw the chestnut gleam of her hair on the bright treacherous water, and in an instant it was swept under a long line of snowy foam. She rose again at a little distance, and her eyes met his pleadingly. Her lips syllabled the words, "Save me!"

He heard them, above all the deafening roar of the waters. They nerved him on to fresh exertions. Another stroke, and he caught her arm, drew her to him, held her closely to his breast, touched her wet hair with his lips. Then he controlled himself, and spoke coolly:

"Take my left hand, Miss Harrison, and I think I can tow you safely to the shore. Do not be afraid."

"I am not afraid," she said, quietly.

How his heart leaped at the sound of her voice! How happy he was that she was not afraid—that she trusted her life to him! Of how little value he would have reckoned his own existence, if he had purchased hers by its loss! Ah, well—love is love, the world over.

A hundred pairs of hands were outstretched to receive Margie, when Arch

brought her to the shore. Her dear devoted friends crowded around her, and in their joy at her escape, Arch retreated for his lodgings. But Miss Lee had been watching him, and seized his arm the moment he was clear of the crowd.

"O Mr. Trevlyn, it is just like a novel!" she exclaimed, enthusiastically. "Only you cannot marry the heroine, for she is engaged to Mr. Linnere; and she perfectly dotes on him."

Trevlyn's countenance did not change. Miss Lee was watching him closely, but she could not detect the slightest variation of color. Her usual astuteness was at fault.

"Allow me to escort you to the house," he said, politely. "I see Mr. Weldon looking daggers at me."

"Mr. Weldon has no right to look daggers at any one on my account, Mr. Trevlyn. As if I cared for that little dandy!"

"All the ladies think him sweet," said Trevlyn, descending to small talk because he wished to avoid all serious subjects with Miss Lee. She jarred so disagreeably upon all the finer feelings of his nature.

"All but myself, Mr. Trevlyn; I beg you to make me an exception. But I will not keep you in your wet clothes. Good-morning."

She flitted away, and Trevlyn went up to his chamber.

That evening there was a "hop" at the hotel, but Arch did not go down. He knew if he did, the inevitable Miss Lee would anchor herself on his arm for the evening; and his politeness was not equal to the task of entertaining her. She was beautiful, and brilliant when she cared to be, and Arch felt that, if he liked, he might marry her and her fortune, and step at once into the very highest circles of society; but he did not aspire to the honor.

The strains of music reached him, softened and made sweet by the distance. He stole down on the piazza, and sat under the shadow of a flowering vine, looking at the sky, with its myriads of glittering stars. There was a light step at his side, and glancing up, he saw Margie Harrison.

She was in evening dress, her white arms and shoulders bare, and glistening with snowy pearls. Her soft unbound hair fell over her neck in a flood of light, and a subtle perfume, like the breath of blooming water-lilies, floated around her.

"I want to make you my captive for a little while, Mr. Trevlyn," she said, gayly. "Will you wear the chains?"

"Like a garland of roses," he responded. "Yes, to the world's end, Miss Harrison!"

The unconscious fervor of his voice brought a crimson flush to her face. She dropped her eyes, and toyed with the bracelet on her arm.

"I did not know you dealt in compliments, Mr. Trevlyn," she said, a little reproachfully. "I thought you were always sincere."

"And so I am, Miss Harrison."

"I take you at your word, then," recovering her playful air. "You will not blame me, if I lead you into difficulty?"

"Certainly not. I give myself into your keeping."

She put her hand within his arm, and led him up the stairs, to a private parlor on the second floor. Under the jet of light sat old Mr. Trevlyn. Archer's heart throbbed fiercely, and his lips grew set and motionless, as he stood there before the man he hated—the man against whom he had made a vow of undying vengeance. Margie was looking at her guardian, and did not observe the startling change which had come over Arch. She spoke softly, addressing the old man.

"Dear guardian, this is the man who this morning so gallantly rescued me from a watery grave. I want you to help me thank him."

Mr. Trevlyn arose, came forward, and extended his hand. Arch stood erect, his arms folded on his breast. He did not move, nor offer to take the proffered hand. Mr. Trevlyn gave a start of surprise, and seizing a lamp from the table, held it up to the face of the young man. Arch did not flinch; he bore the insulting scrutiny with stony calmness.

The old man dashed down the lamp, and put his hand to his forehead. His face was livid with passion, his voice choked so as to be scarcely audible.

"Margie, Margie Harrison," he exclaimed, "what is this person's name?"

"Archer Trevlyn, sir," answered the girl, amazed at the strange behaviour of the two men.

"Just as I thought! Hubert's son!"

"Yes," said Arch, speaking with painful calmness, "I am Hubert's son; the son of the man your wicked cruelty murdered."

Mr. Trevlyn seized his cane and rushed upon his grandson; but Margie sprang forward and threw her arm across the breast of Arch. Her eyes blazed, her cheeks burnt with indignant crimson.

"Strike him, if you dare!" she said, "but you shall strike a woman!"

Mr. Trevlyn looked at her, and the weapon dropped to the floor.

"Margaret Harrison," he said, sternly, "leave this room. This is no place for you. Obey me!"

"I am subject to no man's authority," she said, boldly, "and I will not leave the room. You shall not insult a gentleman to whom I owe my life, and who is here as my invited guest."

"I shall defend myself! There is murder in that fellow's eye, if ever I saw it in that of any human being!"

"I am answerable for his conduct," she said, with proud dignity. "He will do nothing of which a lady need stand in fear. I brought him here, ignorant of the relationship existing between you and him, and unconscious of the truth that I should be called upon to defend him from the causeless rage of his own grandfather!"

Again the cane was uplifted; but Margie laid her hand resolutely upon it.

"Give it to me. Will you—you, who pride yourself upon your high and delicate sense of honor—will you be such an abject coward as to strike a defenceless man?"

He yielded her the weapon, and she threw it from the window.

"You may take away my defence, Margaret," said the old man, resolutely, "but you shall not prevent me from cursing him! A curse be upon him—"

"Hold, sir! Remember that your head is white with the snows of time! It will not be long before you will go to the God who sees you every moment, who will judge you for every sin you commit."

"You may preach that stuff to the dogs! There is no God! I defy him and you! Archer Trevlyn, my curse be upon you and yours, now and forever! Child of a disobedient son! child of a mother who was a harlot!"

Arch sprang upon him with a savage cry. His hand was on his throat—God knows what crime he would have done, fired by the insult offered to the memory of his mother, had not Margie caught his hands, and drawn them away.

"O Archer, Archer Trevlyn!" she cried, imploringly, "grant me this one favor—the very first I ever asked of you! For my sake, come away! He is an old man. Leave him to God, and his own conscience. You are young and strong; you would not disgrace your manhood by laying violent hands on the weakness of old age!"

"Did you not hear what he called my mother? the purest woman the world ever saw! No man shall repeat that foul slander in my presence, and live!"

"He will not repeat it. Forgive him. He is fretful, and he thinks the world has gone hard with him. He has sinned, and those who sin, suffer always. It has been a long and terrible feud between him and yours. I brought you here—let me take you away."

Her soft hands were on his—her beautiful tear-wet eyes lifted to his face. He could not withstand that look. He would have given up the plans of a lifetime, if she had asked him, with those imploring eyes.

"I yield to you, Miss Harrison—only to you," he replied. "If John Trevlyn lives, he owes his life to you. He judged rightly—there was murder in my soul, and he saw it in my eyes. Years ago, after they laid my poor heart-broken mother out of my sight, I swore a terrible vow of vengeance on the old man whose cruelty had hurried her into the grave. But for you, I should have kept the vow this moment! But I will obey you. Take me wherever you will."

She led him down the stairs, across the lawn, and out on the lonely beach, where the quiet moon and the passionless stars dropped down their crystal rain. The sweet south wind blew up cool from sea, and afar off the tinkle of a sheep-bell stirred the silence of the night. The lamp in the distant lighthouse gleamed like a spark of fire, and at their feet broke the tireless billows, white as the snowdrifts of December.

There was something inexpressibly soothing in the serenity of the night. Arch felt its influence. The hot color died out of his cheek, his pulse beat slower, he lifted his eyes to the purple arch of the summer sky.

"All God's universe is at rest," said Margie, her voice breaking upon his ear like a strain of music. "O Archer Trevlyn, be at peace with all mankind!"

"I am—with all but him."

"And with him, also. The heart which bears malice cannot be a happy heart. There has been a great wrong done—I have heard the sad story—but it is divine to forgive. The man who can pardon the enemy who has wrought him evil, rises to a height where nothing of these earthly temptations can harm him more. He stands on a level with the angels of God. If you have been injured, let it pass. If your parents were hurried out of the world by his cruelty, think how much sooner they tasted the bliss of heaven! Every wrong will in due time be avenged. Justice will be done, for the Infinite One has promised it. Leave it in his hands. Archer, before I leave you, promise me to forgive Mr. Trevlyn."

"I cannot! I cannot!" he cried, hoarsely. "O Margie, Miss Harrison, ask of me anything but that, even to the sacrifice of my life, and I will willingly oblige you; but not that! not that!"

"That is all I ask. It is for your good and my peace of mind that I demand it. You have no right to make me unhappy, as your persistence in this dreadful course will do. Promise me, Archer Trevlyn!"

She put her hand on his shoulder; he turned his head and pressed his lips upon it. She did not draw it away, but stood, melting his hard heart with her wonderfully sweet gaze. He yielded all at once—she knew she had conquered. He sank down on one knee before her, and bowed his face upon his hands. She stooped over him, her hair swept his shoulders, the brown mingling with the deeper chestnut of his curling locks.

"You will promise me, Mr. Trevlyn?"

He looked up suddenly.

"What will you give me, if I promise?"

"Ask for it."

He lifted a curl of shining hair.

"Yes," she said. "Promise me what I ask, and I give it to you."

He took his pocket-knife and severed the tress.

"I promise you. I break my vow; I seek no revenge. I forgive John Trevlyn, and may God forgive him, also. He is safe from me. I submit to have my parents sleep on unavenged. I leave him and his sins to the God whom he denies; and all because you have asked it of me."

He rose up, and stood silently by her side. The moon had been clouded for a moment—it burst forth with almost daz-

zling radiance. Arch Trevlyn touched the white hand on his arm with reverent tenderness. The hour was late. He could have lingered there with her forever, but her long absence would excite remark.

Slowly and silently they went up to the house. At the door he said no good-night—he only held her hand a moment, closely, and then turned away. He could not trust himself to speak, lest his voice might reveal something his duty would not allow him to think of. She was the promised wife of Mr. Paul Linmere. A cold shudder ran over him at the thought. The beautiful night took on a face of darkness and gloom.

He walked rapidly back to the beach, and threw himself down on the sands where she had stood. He looked up at the mysterious sky, and out at the mysterious ocean. A peace came and settled over him. His tortured heart lapsed into an infinite state of content. He seemed to desire nothing beyond what he had. The present contented and satisfied him. He had forgiven an enemy. Had he indeed risen and entered upon the enjoyment vouchsafed to the angels?

PART II.

PAUL LINMERE's wedding-day drew near. Between him and Margie there was no semblance of affection. Her coldness never varied, and after a few fruitless attempts to excite in her some manifestation of interest, he took his cue from her, and was as coldly indifferent as herself.

A few days before the tenth of October, which was the day appointed for the bridal, Dick Turner, one of Paul's friends, gave a supper at the Bachelors' Club. A supper in honor of Paul, on to testify the sorrow of the Club at the loss of one of its members. It was a very hilarious occasion, and the toasting and wine-drinking extended far into the small hours.

In a somewhat elevated frame of mind, Mr. Paul Linmere left the rooms of the Club at about three o'clock in the morning, to return home. His way lay along the most deserted part of the city—a place where there were few dwellings, and the buildings were mostly stores and warehouses. He was hurrying along, thinking of the last song Dick had sung, and trying, in his maudlin way, to hum a bar of it before the air escaped his memory.

Suddenly a touch on his arm stopped him. The same cold deathly touch he had felt once before. He had drank just enough to feel remarkably brave, and turning, he encountered the strangely-gleaming eyes that had frozen his blood that night in early summer. All his bravado left him. He felt weak and helpless as a child. His breath was suspended—his eyes refused to turn away from the livid face that confronted him.

Not ten rods off he heard, like one in a dream, the steady tramp of a watchman, but he had no power to call to him, though he would have given all the world for the society of something human.

"What is it? what do you want?" he asked, brokenly.

"Justice!" said the mysterious presence; and, as before, the voice seemed to travel through infinite space before it reached him.

"Justice? For whom?"

"Arabel Vere."

"Arabel Vere! Curse her!" he cried, savagely.

The figure lifted a spectral white hand.

"Paul Linmere—beware! The vengeance of the dead reaches sometimes unto the living! There is not water enough in the Seine to drown a woman's hatred! Death itself cannot annihilate it! Beware!"

He struck savagely at the uplifted hand, but his arm met no resistance. He beat only against the impalpable air. His spectral visitor had flown, and left nothing behind to tell of her presence.

With unsteady steps Mr. Paul Linmere hurried home, entered his rooms, and double-locked the doors behind him. Pietro was sleeping in his bed-chamber—he slept there every night now—and his master did not disturb him.

Leo lay on the hearthrug, but gave no other sign of recognition than to half unclose his eyes at the opening of the door. Paul went to the grate to warm his benumbed fingers, and stumbled over the dog as he did so.

"Curse the brute!" he exclaimed, angrily. "I hate it, and yet I dare not kill it! It was *hers*—ay, it was Arabel Vere's. Who says I am afraid to speak her name aloud? Whoever says so lies! I think if the dog were dead I might forget her and hers! I wish he would die! I wish I had the courage to dash his brains out with

this!" He took down a heavy bronze vase, and eyed the dog with fierce hatred. But something in the steady unfaltering gaze of the sagacious brute seemed to deter him. He put up the bronze, and began pacing the floor.

"A little more than a week to my wedding-day! How happy I ought to be! Half New York is envious of me! A beautiful wife and a splendid fortune! But I should hate Margaret Harrison if I dared to." Paul Linmere, are you afraid of her? I should hope not. Certainly not. But she freezes a fellow so! And I know she loathes me! Only think of her telling me last night, when I offered her a late rose, that she did not care for the flowers over which the serpent had trailed! Well, in a few days I shall have her fast, and then trust me to tame her! And if I cannot—if I cannot—she *may* die. People do sometimes. Ha, ha! Arabel Vere did!"

He went to a marble shelf on which stood a costly cut-glass decanter and a slender Bohemian wineglass. He tossed off glass after glass of brandy, until the decanter was empty. Then he flung it down on the marble slab, and it was broken into fragments. * * *

Mr. Trevlyn had decided that the marriage of his ward should take place at Harrison Park, the old country-seat of the Harrisons, on the Hudson. Here Margie's parents had lived always in the summer; here they had died within a week of each other, and here in the cypress grove by the river they were buried. There would be no more fitting place for the marriage of their daughter to be solemnized. Margie neither opposed nor approved the plan. She did not oppose anything. She was passive, almost apathetic.

The admiring dressmakers and milliners came and went, fitting, and measuring, and trying on their tasteful creations, but without eliciting any signs of interest or pleasure from Margie Harrison. She gave no orders, found no fault; expressed no admiration, nor its opposite. It was all the same to her.

The bridal dress came home a few days before the appointed day. It was a superb affair, and Margie looked like a queen in it. It was of white satin, with a point-lace overskirt, looped up at intervals with tiny bouquets of orange-blossoms. The corsage was cut low, leaving the beautiful shoul-

ders bare, and the open sleeve displaying the perfectly-rounded arms in all their perfection. The veil was point-lace, and must have cost a little fortune. Mr. Trevlyn had determined that everything should be on a magnificent scale, and had given the whole arrangement of the affair to Mrs. Colonel Weldon, the mother of Henry Weldon, and the most fashionable woman in her set.

Mrs. Weldon liked nothing better than the purchase of finery. She enjoyed herself perfectly; she would not have been happier, she said to her son, if the things had been her own.

Mr. Trevlyn had the diamonds, which were the wonder of the city, richly set, and Margie was to wear them on her bridal night, as a special mark of the old man's favor. For next to the diamonds, the sor-did man loved Margie Harrison.

Linmere's gift to his bride was very simple, but in exquisite taste, Mrs. Weldon decided. A set of turquoise, with his initials and hers interwoven. Only when they were received did Margie come out of her cold composure. She snapped together the lid of the casket containing them with something very like angry impatience, and gave the box to her maid.

"Take them away, Florine, instantly, and put them where I shall never see them again!"

The woman looked surprised, but she was a discreet piece, and strongly attached to her mistress, and she put the ornaments away without comment.

The tenth of October arrived. A wet lowering day, with alternate snatches of rain and sunshine, settling down towards sunset into a steady uncomfortable drizzle. A dismal enough wedding-day.

The old servants shook their heads, and said the weather foreboded trouble for their young mistress. They had never thought the match would be a happy one; they were sure of it now.

"Ay, ye may depend upon it," said Mrs. Sullivan, who occupied a sort of halfway position between housemaid and companion in general, "a wedding on a day like this can never be a lucky one. I've known many and many a one, and never in a single instance were they prospered. There'll be trouble and difficulty enough before it's over."

"Don't croak, Mistress Sullivan," said

Pat Dooley, the coachman. "Signs fall sometimes, I'm thinking. And shure there's no harm to come to Miss Margaret, bless her swate face! or fate will be making a mistake of it! There may be trouble, but not for her—not for her!"

"I hope ye're right, Pat," said Mrs. Sullivan, smoothing out her spotless apron to straighten out an imaginary wrinkle, "but I fear me ye may not be. There was John Russell, as bonny a fellow as ever trod, and he married sweet Mary Gray on just such a weeping day as this, and before that day year they were both under the soda. And Nellie Haley, too. Who ever had a brighter prospect than she? and she in a madhouse this day, and her husband a miserable drunkard. And how it rained the day that made her bride! Sure it was I went to the wedding—it was at St. John's of a Sunday, and the church was crowded, and my new merino dress was ruined with the rain and mud, coming home. Ay, I tell ye all, I always tremble when it rains on a wedding-day!"

The ceremony was to take place at nine o'clock in the evening, and the invited guests were numerous. Harrison Park would accommodate them all royally.

Mr. Linmere was expected out from the city in the six o'clock train, and as the stopping-place was not more than five minutes' walk from the Park, he had left orders that no carriage need be sent. He would walk up. He thought he should need the stimulus of the fresh air to carry him through the fiery ordeal, he said, laughingly.

The long day wore slowly away. The preparations were complete. Mrs. Weldon, in her violet moire antique and family diamonds, went through the stately parlors once more, to assure herself that everything was *au fait*. Her son surveyed himself in the tall pier-glasses, adjusted his buff necktie, and wondered if Miss Alexandrine Lee would not think him perfectly killing in his white gloves, and the bridal favor in his buttonhole. He was in the seventh heaven, for Alexandrine had consented to stand up with him on the occasion, and this he regarded as a favorable sign.

At five o'clock the task of dressing the bride began. The bridesmaids were in ecstasies over the finery, and they took almost as much pains in dressing Margie

as they would in dressing themselves for a like occasion. For next to being a bride herself, a woman enjoys assisting at making some other woman one—provided always she has never had any tender regard for the bridegroom.

Margie's cheeks were as white as the robes they put upon her. One of the girls suggested rouge, but Alexandrine demurred.

"A bride should always be pale," she said; "it looks so interesting, and gives every one the idea that she realizes the responsibility she is taking upon herself—doesn't that veil fall sweetly?"

And then followed a shower of feminine expressions of admiration from the four charming bridesmaids.

"Is everything ready?" asked Margie, wearily, when at last they paused in their efforts.

"Yes, everything is as perfect as one could desire," said Alexandrine. "How do you feel, Margie dear?"

"Very well, thank you."

"You are so self-possessed! Now, I should be all of a tremble. Dear me! I wonder people can be so cool on the eve of such a great change. But then, we are so different! Will you not take a glass of wine, Margie?"

"Thank you, no. I do not take wine, you know."

"I know, but on this occasion. Hush! that was the whistle of the train. Mr. Lumere will be here in a few minutes. Shall I bring him up to see you? It is not etiquette for the groom to see the bride on the day of their marriage until they meet at the altar, but you look so charming, dear! I would like him to admire you. He has such exquisite taste!"

Margie's uplifted eyes had a half-frightened look which Alexandrine did not understand.

"No, no!" she said, hurriedly; "do not bring him here! We will follow etiquette for this time, if you please, Miss Lee."

"O well, just as you please, my dear."

"And now, my friends, be kind enough to leave me alone," said Margie. "I want the last hours of my free life to myself. I will ring when I desire your attendance."

Margie's manner forbade any objection on the part of the attendants, and they

somewhat reluctantly withdrew. She turned the key upon them, and went to the window. The rain had ceased falling, but the air was damp and dense.

Her room was on the first floor, and the windows, furnished with balconies, opened to the floor. She stood looking out into the night for a moment, then gathering up her flowing drapery, and covering herself with a heavy cloak, stepped from the window. The damp earth struck a chill to her delicately-shod feet, but she did not notice it. The mist and fog dampened her hair unheeded. She went swiftly down the shaded path, the dead leaves of the linden trees rustling mournfully as she swept through them. Past the garden and its deserted summer-houses, and the grapery, where the purple fruit was lavishing its sweets on the air, and climbing a stile, she stood beside a group of shading cypress trees. Just before her was a square enclosure, fenced by a hedge of arbor vitae, from the midst of which, towering white and spectral up into the silent night, rose a marble shaft, surmounted by the figure of an angel, with drooping head and folded wings. Margie passed within the enclosure, and stood beside the graves of her parents. She stood a moment, silent, motionless; then, forgetful of her bridal garments, she flung herself down on the turf.

"O my father! my father!" she cried, "why did you doom me to such a fate? Why did you ask me to give that fatal promise? O look down from heaven and pity your child!"

The winds sighed mournfully in the cypresses, the belated crickets and katydids droned in the hedge, but no sweet voice of sympathy soothed Margie's strained ear. For, wrought up as she was, she almost listened to hear some response from the lips which death had made mute forever.

What sympathy have the angels in heaven with the woes of the children of men? Do they ever pity us there? ever drop a tear—if tears are not unknown in heaven—over the sorrows of those they loved on earth, whom they have left behind them to drag out the existences of grief and weariness that we must all pass through?

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE FATAL GLOVE:

—OR,—

THE HISTORY OF A STREET-SWEEPER.

IN FOUR PARTS.

BY CLARA AUGUSTA.

PART IV.—[CONCLUDED.]

LOUIS CASTRANI received one day an urgent summons to Boston. It was the very day following that on which he had been an unwilling listener to the difficulty between Mr. and Mrs. Trevlyn. He knew from whom the summons came. Once before he had been suddenly called upon in like manner.

A wretched woman she was now, but once the belle and beauty of the fair Cuban town where Castrani's childhood and youth had been spent. She had been a beautiful orphan, adopted by his parents, and brought up almost as his sister. Perhaps in those days, when they played together under the soft southern skies, he knew no difference.

Now she was dying. So said the message. Dying, and burdened with a secret which she could confess to no ears save his. Before, when he had gone to her, she had rallied after his arrival, and had declined making confession. She should never speak of it, she said, until her death was sure. But when she felt dissolution drawing nigh she should send for him again. And the summons had come. He obeyed it in haste, and one night, just before sunset, he stood by her bedside.

Once she had been beautiful, with such beauty as a pure complexion, black eyes, raven hair and perfect features confer; but now she was a wreck. The pure transparent complexion was as pale as marble, the brilliant eyes sunken, the magnificent hair bleached white as the wintry snow.

She welcomed him brokenly, her eyes fighting up with the pleasure of seeing him; and then the light faded away, leaving her even more ghastly than before.

"They tell me I am dying," she said, hoarsely. "Do you think so?"

He smoothed back the hair on the damp forehead—damp already with the dews of death. His look assured her better than the words he could not bring himself to speak.

"My poor Arabel!"

"Arabel! Who calls me Arabel?" she asked, dreamily. "I have not heard that name since *he* spoke it! What a sweet voice he had! O, so sweet!—but false than Satan. O Louis, Louis! if we could go back to the old days among the orange groves, before I sinned—when we were innocent little children!"

"It is all over now, Arabel. You were tempted; but God is good to forgive, if repentance is sincere."

"O, I have repented! I have, indeed! And I have prayed as well as I knew how. But my crimes are so fearful! You are sure that Christ is very merciful?"

"Very merciful, Arabel."

"More merciful, more gentle and loving than our best friends, Louis?"

"He forgave those who crucified him."

"O, if I could only trust him!—if I only could!"

She clasped her hands, and her pale lips moved in prayer, though there was no audible word.

"Let me hold your hand, Louis. It gives me strength. And you were always a friend so true and steadfast. How happy we were in those dear old days—you, and Inez, and I! Ah, Inez—Inez! She died in her sweet innocence, loving and beloved—died by violence; but she never lived to suffer from the falsity of those she loved! Well, she is in paradise—God rest her!"

The dark eyes of Castrani grew moist. There arose before him a picture of the

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fair young girl he had loved—the gentle-eyed Inez—the confiding young thing he was to have married had not the hand of a cruel jealousy cut short her brief existence. Arabel saw his emotion, and pressed his hand in hers, so cold and icy.

"You have suffered also, Louis, but not as I have—O no! O, the days before he came—he, the destroyer! What a handsome face he had, and how he flattered me! Flattered my foolish pride, until, deserting home and friends, I fled with him across the seas! To Paris—beautiful, frivolous, crime-imbued Paris. I am so faint and tired, Louis! Give me a drink from the wineglass."

He put it to her lips; she swallowed greedily, and resumed:

"I have written out my history fully. Why, I hardly know, for there are none but you, Louis, who will feel an interest in the poor outcast. But something has impelled me to write it, and when I am dead, you will find it there in that desk, sealed, and directed to yourself. Maybe you will never open it, for if my strength does not desert me, I shall tell you all that you will care to know with my own lips. I want to watch your face as I go on, and see if you condemn me. You are sure God is more merciful than man?"

"In his word it is written, Arabel."

She kissed an ivory cross lying on her bosom, and proceeded with evident difficulty.

"Well, I fled with Paul Linmere. For a time I was very happy. He was kind to me, and I loved him so! We lived in a little vine-wreathed cottage, on the banks of the Seine, and I had my tiny flower-garden, my books, my birds, my faithful dog Leo—and Paul! Every pleasant night he used to take me out on the river in the little boat which bore my name on its side. O, those nights of perfect peace! The stars shone so softly, and the moon beamed with a mellow light peculiar to southern moons, and like the cold lustre of these wintry moons, no more than summer is like snow and ice! Those seasons of delight are a sweet dream in my memory. They seemed stolen from paradise—they were so perfect. I lived in a sort of blissful waking trance, that left me nothing to desire, nothing to ask for. Fool that I was! I thought it was to last always. A little more cordial, Louis; it will keep

the spark of life alive, perhaps, until I have finished."

"Do not exert yourself, Arabel," he said, pityingly; "I do not wish you to."

"I shall die easier. Let me go on. This pain in my side stops my breath, but the cordial relieves it. After a while Paul wearied of me. Perhaps I was too lavish of my caresses and words of love; it might tire him to be loved so intensely. But such was my nature. A child of the south, I loved as only a fervid southern nature can, abandoning myself utterly to the grand passion. He grew cold and distant; at times positively ill-natured. Once he struck me; but I forgave him the blow, because he had taken too much wine. At length it became known to me that I was about to become a mother, and I besought him to give me a right to his name. I could bear the shame for myself, but my child must not be born to curse the author of its being. He laughed me to scorn, and called me by a foul name that I cannot repeat. But I bore it all, for the sake of my unborn child, and on my knees I begged and prayed of him to legalize our union by the rite of marriage. After the first he made no reply, but subsided into a sullen silence, which I could not make him break. That night he asked me to go out boating with him. I prepared myself with alacrity, for I thought he was getting pleased with me, and perhaps would comply with my request. Are you weary of my story, Louis?"

"No, no. Go on. I am listening to you, Arabel."

"It was a lovely night. The stars gleamed like drops of molten gold, and the moon looked down, pure, and serene, and holy. The river was smooth as glass; not a ripple disturbed its pulseless silence. No other human beings were in sight. I could almost imagine that he and I were alone in the world. Paul was unusually silent, and I was quiet, waiting for him to speak. Suddenly, when we reached the middle of the river, he dropped the oars, and we drifted with the current. He sprang up, his motion nearly capsizing the frail boat, and, taking a step towards me, fastened a rough hand upon my shoulder. 'Arabel,' he said, hoarsely, 'your power over me is among the things of the past. Once I thought I loved you, but it was merely a passion, which soon burned itself out.

After that I grew to hate you; but, because I had taken you away from home and friends, I tried to treat you civilly. Your caresses disgusted me. I would gladly have cast you off long ago, if I had had but the shadow of a pretext. I am to be married to a beautiful woman in America before many months shall elapse—a woman with a name, and a fortune which will help me pay those cursed debts that are dragging me down like a millstone. For you I have no further use. You complain that our unborn child will be disgraced, unless I go through the mockery of marriage with you. There is no disgrace in the grave—and I consign you to its dreamless sleep! The next moment the boat was capsized, and I was floating in the water. I cried aloud his name, beseeching him to save me, and met only his mocking laugh in return, as he struck out for the shore. I could not swim, and I felt myself sinking down—down to unfathomable depths. I felt cold as ice; there was a deafening roar in my ears, and I knew no more."

"My poor Arabel! I could curse the villain who did this cowardly thing, but he is dead, and in the hands of God!"

"When I woke to consciousness I was lying in a rude cottage, and two persons, unknown to me—a man and a woman—were bending over me, applying hot flannels to my numbed limbs, and restoratives to my lips. Before morning my child was born; but it never opened its eyes on this world. Death took it himself away. I had some articles of jewelry on my person of some considerable value, and with these I bribed the persons who had taken me from the river to cause Mr. Linmere to believe that I had died. They were rough people, but they were kind-hearted, and I owe them a large debt of gratitude for their thoughtful care of me. But for it I should have died in reality. As soon as I was able to bear the journey, I left France. Linmere had already closed the cottage, and gone away—none knew whither; but I was satisfied he had departed for the United States. I left France with no feeling of regret, save for Leo, my faithful hound. I have shed many bitter tears when pondering over the probable fate of my poor dog."

"Be easy on that subject, Arabel. I saw the hound but a few weeks ago. He

is the property of a lady who loves him—the woman Paul Linmere was to have married if he had lived."

"I am glad. You may laugh at me, Louis, but the uncertain fate of Leo has given me great unhappiness. But to continue—I engaged myself with an English family, who had been travelling on the continent, and were about returning home—engaged myself as a nursemaid. I remained with them until I had accumulated sufficient funds to defray my expenses across the Atlantic, and then I set out on my journey. I came to New York, for that had been Mr. Linmere's home before he went to France. I soon got upon track of him, and learned that he was about to be married to a Miss Margaret Harrison, a young lady of great beauty, and with a large fortune. I wanted to see her; for you must know that I had registered a fearful vow of vengeance on Mr. Paul Linmere, and I desired to judge for myself if it would fall heavily on the woman whom he was going to marry. For even violently as I had loved him, I now hated him. I loathed the very air he breathed, and committed to the flames the clothing his money had purchased."

"I saw Miss Harrison. I accosted her in the street one day, as any common beggar would have done, telling her a pitiful story of my poverty. She smiled on me, spoke a few words of comfort, and laid a piece of gold in my hand. Her sweet face charmed me. Impassioned as ever, I would have been willing to have died for her if my life could have benefited her. I set myself to find out if she cared for the man she was to marry. It had been all arranged by her father, years before, I understood, and I felt convinced that her heart was not interested. If it had been, in spite of my vow, in spite of my utter detestation of Paul Linmere, I should have renounced my scheme of revenge, and allowed the guilty man to escape, for her sweet sake. But I ascertained, beyond a doubt, that she did not love him; even more—that she dreaded unutterably the union into which she was being forced."

"After that, nothing could have saved Paul Linmere. His fate was decided. Twice I waylaid him in the streets, and showed him my pale face, which was not unlike the face of the dead. And as he believed that I was drowned, the sight of

me filled him with the most abject terror. How I enjoyed the poor wretch's cowardly horror! It was like food to the starving man, for me to see his face grow white, and his eyes start from their sockets, at sight of the woman whom he thought the worms were feasting upon.

"The night that he was to be married I lay in wait for him at the place where the brook crossed the highway. I had learned that he was to walk up alone from the depot to the house of his expectant bride, and there I resolved to avenge my wrongs. I stepped before him when he came, laid my cold hand on his arm, and bade him follow me. He obeyed in the most abject submission. He seemed to have no will of his own, but yielded himself entirely to mine. He shook like one in the ague, and his footsteps faltered so that at times I had to drag him along. I took him to the lonely graveyard, where sleep the Harrison dead, and—" She covered her face with her hands, and relapsed into silence.

"Well, Arabel, and then?" asked Castrani, fearfully absorbed in the strange narrative, feeling, as he listened, that the fate of Archer Trevlyn hung on the next words the wretched woman might speak.

"I dropped the hood from my face, and confronted him. I had no pity. My heart was like stone. I remembered all my wrongs; I said to myself this was the man who had made my life a shipwreck, and had sent my soul to perdition. He stood still, frozen to the spot, gazing into my face with eyes that gleamed through the gloom like lurid fire. 'I am Arabel Vere, whom you thought you murdered!' I hissed in his ear. 'The river could not hold me secure! And thus I avenge myself for all my wrongs!'

"I struck one blow; he fell to the ground with a gurgling groan. I knew that I had killed him, and I felt no remorse at the thought. It seemed a very pleasant thing to contemplate. I stooped over him, to assure myself that he was dead, and touched his forehead. It was growing cold. It struck me through and through with a chill of unutterable horror. I fled, like one mad, from the place. I entered a train of cars, which were just going down to the city, and in the morning I left New York, and came here. I fell sick. The terrible excitement had been too much for me, and for weeks I lay in a stu-

por which was the twin-sister of death. But a strong constitution triumphed, and I came slowly back to health. I had some money on my person at the time I was taken ill, and happening to fall into the hands of a kind-hearted Irish woman, at whose door I had asked for a glass of water, I was nursed with a care which saved my life.

"But I have never seen a moment of happiness since. Remorse has preyed upon me like a worm, and once before this I have been brought face to face with death. Now I am going—going where I sent him. God be merciful!"

"Amen!" responded Louis, fervently.

It was very still in the room. Castrani sat by the bedside, waiting for her to speak. She was silent so long he thought she slept, and stooped over her to ascertain. Yes, she did sleep. In this world she would never waken more!

Castrani remained in Boston, and saw the remains of the unfortunate Arabel Vere consigned to decent burial; and, that duty accomplished, he took the first train for Lightfield. He had in his possession a document which would clear Archer Trevlyn from the foul crime of which he stood convicted in the mind of Margaret Harrison; and, aside from his desire to see justice rendered the man whom he had grown to consider a very dear friend, Castrani felt that it would make Margaret happier to know that the one she had loved and trusted so entirely once was innocent of the crime imputed to him.

It was sunset when he reached the dwelling of Nurse Day. Margaret was sitting on the veranda, with Leo by her side. The hound ran down to the gate, to give the visitor a joyful greeting, and Margie descended the steps and held out her hand. She was very kind, almost cordial, for she respected Castrani with her whole heart, and she was pleased to see him.

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Castrani," she remarked, leading him into the sitting-room; "and so, also, will be Nurse Day, when she returns. She has gone to a prayer-meeting now. And I am especially pleased to see you just at this time, because I am thinking of returning to New York, and I hope to persuade you to give me your escort, if it will not be asking too much."

"To New York? Indeed, that is delightful intelligence for the five hundred dear friends who have deplored your absence so long. I had feared sometimes that you intended to remain here always."

"I almost wish I could—life has been so peaceful here. But I must go back sooner or later; as well now as at any time. I think I am strong enough to bear it," she added, sadly.

"Miss Harrison, I want to tell you a story."

She drew back from the hand he laid on hers, and her air became cold and repelling. He divined her fears, and smiled a melancholy smile.

"No, not that. Do not fear. I shall never again trouble you with the story of my unfortunate passion. I must go through life without the blessing that would have made this world a paradise. It is not that of which I would speak, and you need have no apprehensions for the future. God helping me, I will never say to you a single word that a brother might not say to a dearly-beloved sister."

She put her hand into his.

"I wish I could love you, Louis Castrani," she said, solemnly. "You deserve my heart's best affections; but for me love is over! I have had my day, and it is set. But you shall be my brother—my dear kind brother Louis! O, it is sweet to know that in this false world there is one heart loyal and true!"

"Margaret, there is more than one true heart in the world, as you will acknowledge when I have told you my little story. I know now why you discarded Archer Trevlyn. You thought him guilty of the murder of Paul Linmere?"

A ghastly pallor overspread her face; she caught her breath in gasps, and clutched frantically the arm of Castrani.

"Hush!" she said. "Do not say those dreadful words aloud; the very walls have ears sometimes. Remember their utterance puts the life of a fellow-mortal in peril!"

"Have no fear; I am going to right the wrong."

"Leave his punishment to God. It would kill me to see him brought before a hissing crowd, to be tried for his life. O Mr. Castrani! I implore you—"

"Calm yourself, my child. I shall never knowingly injure Mr. Trevlyn. He de-

serves no punishment for a sin he never committed. He is as guiltless of *that deed* as you are yourself!"

"Guiltless—Archer guiltless!" she cried, her face wearing the pitiful strained look of agonized suspense. "I do not quite comprehend. Say it again—O, say it again!"

"Margaret, Archer Trevlyn never lifted a hand against Paul Linmere—never! He is innocent before God and the angels!"

She dropped her head upon her hands, and burst into tears—the first she had shed since that terrible night when that blasting revelation had, as she thought, sealed up the fountain of tears forever. Castrani did not seek to soothe her; he judged rightly that she would be better for this abandonment to a woman's legitimate source of relief. She lifted her wet face at last—but what a change was there! The transparent paleness had given place to the sweet wild-rose color which had once made Margie so very lovely, and the sad eyes were brilliant as stars, through the mist of tears.

"I believe it—yes, I believe it!" she said, softly, reverently. "I thank God for giving me the assurance. You tell me so. You would not, unless it were true!"

"No, Margaret; I would not," replied Castrani, strongly affected. "Heaven forbid that I should raise hopes which I cannot verify. When you are calm enough to understand, I will explain it fully."

"I am calm now. Go on."

"I must trouble you with a little, only a little, of my own private history, in order that you may understand what follows. I am, as you know, a Cuban by birth, but my father, only, was Spanish. My mother was a native of Boston, who married my father for love, and went with him to his southern home. I was an only child, and when I was about twelve years of age my parents adopted a girl, some four years my junior. She was the orphan child of poor parents, and was possessed of wonderful beauty and intelligence. Together we grew up, and no brother and sister ever loved each other more fully than we. It was only a brotherly and sisterly love—for I was engaged at sixteen to Inez De Nuncio, a lovely young Spanish girl, who was cruelly taken away from me by the hand of violence, as you know. Arabel grew to girlhood, lovely as a houri. Lovely,

however, is not the right word; she was royally magnificent. I have seen many elegant women, but never one who for stately grace and beauty would compare with her. She had many suitors, but she favored none, until he came—Paul Linnere, the fiend and destroyer! Ill health had driven him to Cuba, to try the effect of our southern air, and soon after his arrival he became acquainted with Arabel. He was very handsome and fascinating, and much sought after by the fair ladies of my native town. Arabel was vain, and his devoted attentions flattered her, while his handsome face and fascinating address won her love. She was a passionate child of the south, uncalculating as a babe where her affections were concerned; and, before my parents had begun to apprehend any danger from Linnere's society, she had left everything, and fled with him.

"My mother was plunged in grief, for she had loved Arabel like an own daughter; and the uncertainty of her fate, I think, hastened my mother's death. My father left no means untried to discover the whereabouts of the erring girl—but in vain. For years her fate was shrouded in mystery. My parents died, Inez was taken from me, and, weary and heartsick, I came to New York, hoping to find some distraction in new scenes and among a new people.

"The day before you left New York I received a message from Arabel Vere. She was in Boston—ill unto death. She wanted to see me once more; and she had a sin upon her conscience which she must confess before she died; and she could confess it to no person but myself. In obedience to this summons I hurried to Boston, and the same train that carried me, carried you, also.

"I found Arabel but a mere wreck of her former self. Her countenance told me how fearfully she had suffered. She was very ill, in a wretched room, with no attendants or medical aid. I had her immediately removed to lodgings suitable for her, and provided a nurse and a physician. From that time she began to mend, and in a couple of days the physician pronounced her out of immediate danger. When she knew that her life was to be prolonged, she refused to make the confession she had summoned me to hear. So long as there was any prospect of her recovery,

she said, she must keep the matter a secret. But she could not die and leave it untold. Therefore, she promised that whenever she should feel death approaching she would send again for me, and relieve her soul by the confession of her sin.

"I bade her adieu, leaving with her a sum of money sufficient to keep her from want until she should be able to resume her employment, which was the copying of law-papers for a well-known attorney. I held myself in readiness to answer her summons whenever it should arrive, and a few days ago it came.

"Previous to this, only a little while, I had been inadvertently a listener to an altercation between Archer Trevlyn and his wife, during which Mrs. Trevlyn, in a fit of rage, denounced her husband as the murderer of Paul Linnere. She produced proofs, which I confess struck me as strangely satisfactory, and affirmed her belief in his guilt. She also told him that because the knowledge of his crime had come to you, you had discarded him, and left New York, to be rid of him forever!

"So, knowing this, when I listened to the dying confession of Arabel Vere, I knew that that confession would clear Archer Trevlyn from all shadow of suspicion. Arabel died, and I buried her. Previous to her death—perhaps to guard against accident, perhaps, guided by the hand of a mysterious Providence, to clear the fair fame of an injured man—she wrote out at length the history of her life. She gave it to me. I have it here. It will explain to you all that you will desire to know. I brought it first to you, Margaret, because I felt that it would be a sweet comfort to you to know that the man to whom you gave your love and confidence was innocent of the brand of Cain!"

He gave her the manuscript, wrung her hand, and left her.

Far into the night Margie sat reading the closely-written sheets, penned by the hand now pulseless in death. All was made clear; Archer Trevlyn was fully exculpated. He was innocent of the crime which she had been influenced to believe he had committed. She fell on her knees and thanked God for that. Though lost to her, it was a consolation ineffable to know that he had not taken the life of a fellow-man. And thinking it all over, she

came to believe that Arabel Vere was more sinned against than sinning. Remembering her great provocation, Margie could not utterly condemn her for her fearful sin. And, with a shudder, she remembered that, but for that sin, she herself should have been the wife of a black-hearted villain as ever breathed.

Her resolution was taken before morning. She had deeply wronged Archer Trevlyn, and she must go to him with a full explanation, confess her fault, and plead for his forgiveness. She could not live without it, now that she knew how unjust she had been to him.

Castrani, who came in the morning, approved her decision; and Nurse Day, who was told the whole story, and listened with moist eyes, agreed with them both. So it happened that on the ensuing morning Margie bade farewell to the quiet home which had sheltered her through her bitterest sorrow, and, accompanied by Castrani, set forth for New York.

Margie clung to Castrani with almost childish fear; she had been so long separated from the world that the sight of its confusion, particularly now that the whole country was rushing to arms, *alarmed and distressed* her.

She went to her own home first. Her aunt was in the country, but the servants gave her a warm welcome, and after resting for an hour, she took her way to the residence of Archer Trevlyn, but a few squares distant.

A strange silence seemed to hang over the palatial mansion. The blinds were closed—there was no sign of life about the premises. A thrill of unexplained dread ran through her frame as she touched the silver-handled bell. The servant who answered her summons seemed to partake of the strange solemn quiet of everything.

"Is Mr. Trevlyn in?" she asked, trembling in spite of herself.

"I believe Mr. Trevlyn has left the country, madam."

"Left the country! When did he go?"

"Some days ago."

Margie leaned against the carved marble vase which flanked the massive doorway, unconsciously crushing the crimson petals of the trumpet-flower which grew therein. What should she do? She could write to him. His wife would know his address. She caught at the idea.

"Mrs. Trevlyn—take me to her! She was an old friend of mine."

The man looked at her curiously, hesitated a moment, and motioning her to enter, indicated the closed door of the parlor.

"You can go in, I presume, as you are a friend of the family."

A feeling of solemnity, which was almost awe, stole over Margie as she turned the handle of the door and stepped inside the parlor. It was shrouded in the gloom of almost utter darkness. The heavy silken curtains fell *drooping with their costliness* to the velvet carpet, and a faint sickening odor of withering water-lilies pervaded the close atmosphere. Water-lilies!—they were Alexandrine's favorite flower.

Margie stopped by the door until her eyes became accustomed to the gloom, and then she saw that the centre of the room was occupied by a table, on which lay some rigid object—strangely long, and still, and angular—covered with a drapery of black velvet, looped up by dying water-lilies.

Still controlled by that feeling of strange awe, Margie stole along to the table and lifted the massive cover. She saw beneath *it the pale dead face of Alexandrine Trevlyn*. She dropped the pall, uttered a cry of horror, and sank upon a chair. The door unclosed noiselessly, and Mrs. Lee, the mother of the dead woman, came in. Her sable dress swept the carpet with a doleful sound, like the sighing of the wind amid the cypress trees of a graveyard. Margie shivered with an almost superstitious terror. Mrs. Lee flew to her side, and flung her arms wildly around Margaret.

"O Margie! Margie!" she cried, "pity me! My heart is broken! My darling! my only child is taken from me!"

It was long before she grew composed enough to give any explanation of the tragedy—for tragedy Margaret felt assured it was.

The story can be told in a few brief words. Infinitely sad it is that so much suffering can be related in a few brief paragraphs. Alexandrine and her husband had had some difficulty. Mrs. Lee could not tell in relation to what, but she knew that Alexandrine blamed herself for the part she had taken. Mr. Trevlyn left her in anger, to go to Philadelphia on business. He was expected to be absent about four days. Meanwhile, his wife suffered agonies

of remorse, and counted the hours until his return should give her the privilege of throwing herself at his feet and begging his forgiveness.

But he did not return. A week, ten days, passed, and still no tidings. Alexandrine was almost frantic. On the eleventh day came a telegraphic despatch, brief and cruel, as those heartless things invariably are, informing her that Mr Trevlyn had closed his business in Philadelphia, and was on the eve of leaving the country for an indefinite period. His destination was not mentioned, and his unhappy wife, feeling that if he left Philadelphia without her seeing him, all trace of him would be lost, hurried to the depot and set out for that city.

There had been an accident about half way between New York and Philadelphia—one of those cases of sheer carelessness that we read of with so little interest every day—and Alexandrine Trevlyn had been brought back to her splendid home—a corpse! That was all.

Archer Trevlyn had left behind him no clue by which he might be reached, or communicated with, and his wife, unforgiven, must be consigned to the tomb without a single tear upon her face from the eyes of him she had loved so fondly.

They buried her at Greenwood, and the grass and flowers bloomed over her grave. She passed out of memory, and was forgotten, like a perished leaf, or a beautiful sunset fading out with the night.

The summer days fled on, and brought the autumn mellowness and splendor. Margie, outwardly calm and quiet, lived at Harrison Park with her staid maiden aunt. Life had become monotonous and uneventful to her. *She expected nothing from the future here—she only aimed to deserve the blessed immortality which is promised to the faithful.*

Her existence was much that of any other single woman. She sewed, and looked after her servants, and drove out pleasant afternoons, and visited the poor people who were fortunate enough to reside in her vicinity. Amusement or entertainment, as the world judges, she had very little; her life was one long system of waiting. And for what? When she asked herself the question, the invariable reply was "Nothing."

A year passed away thus monotonously, and then another, and no tidings ever came of Archer Trevlyn. Margie thought of him now as we think of one long dead, with tender regret, and love almost reverent. He was dead to her, she said, but it was no sin to cherish his memory.

In the third year Margie's aunt married. It was quite a little romance. An old lover, discarded years before in a fit of girlish obstinacy, came back, after weary wanderings in search of happiness, and seeking out the love of other days, wooed and won her over again.

There was a quiet wedding, and then the happy pair decided on a trip to Europe. And, of course, Margie must accompany them. At first she demurred; she took so little pleasure in anything, she feared her presence might mar their happiness, and she dreaded to leave the place where she had passed so many delightful hours with him. But her aunt and Doctor Elbert refused to give her up, and so one beautiful September morning, they sailed for Liverpool in the good ship Colossus.

For many days the voyage was prosperous, but in mid-ocean they fell upon stormy weather, and the ship was tossed about at the mercy of the winds and waters. It was a terrible storm, and great apprehensions were entertained that the vessel might founder, but she would doubtless have weathered the blast in safety, if she had not sprung a leak.

The fearful intelligence was announced just at the closing in of a dark dismal night, and every heart sank, and every face was shrouded in gloom. Only for a moment! The men sprang to the pumps and worked with a will—as men will work for their lives—but their efforts were in vain. The water increased in the hold, and it soon became evident that the Colossus would hardly keep afloat until morning.

But Providence was pleased to snatch those human lives from the destruction which seemed inevitable, and just when they were most hopeless, most despairing, the lights of a strange ship flashed athwart their reckless course. They succeeded in making their desperate condition known, and by day dawn all were safe on board the steamer; for the stranger proved to be a steamer on her way from Liverpool to New York.

The decks were crowded; Doctor Elbert.

was looking after his wife, and Margie, clinging close to a rope, stood frightened and alone. Some one came to her, said a few words which the tempest made inaudible, and carried her below. The light of the cabin lamps fell full on his face. She uttered a cry, for in that moment she recognized Archer Trevlyn.

"Margie Harrison?" he cried, his fingers closing tightly over hers. "Margie! Mine! mine at last! The ocean has given you up to me!"

"O Archer! where have you been? It has been so weary! And I have wanted to see you so much—that I might ask you to forgive me. Will you pardon me for believing that you could ever be guilty of that man's death? If you knew all—if you knew how artfully it was represented to me—what overwhelming proofs were presented, you would not so much wonder—"

"I do know all, Margie; Alexandrine told me. My poor wife! God rest her. She believed me guilty, and yet her fatal love for me overlooked the crime. She deceived me in many things, but she is dead, and I will not be unforgiving. She poisoned my mind with suspicions of you and Louis Castrani, and I was fool enough to credit her insinuations. Margie, I want you to pardon me."

"I do freely. Castrani is a noble soul! I love him as I would a brother."

"Continue to do so, Margie. He deserves it, I think. The night I left home, Alexandrine revealed to me the cause of your sudden rejection of me. We quarrelled terribly. I remember it with bitter remorse. We parted in anger, Margie, and she died without my forgiveness and blessing. It was very hard, but perhaps, at the last, she did not suffer. I will believe so."

"If she sinned, it was through love of you, Archer, and that should make you very forgiving toward her."

"I have forgiven her long ago. I know the proofs were strong against me. I am not sure but that they were sufficient to have convicted me of murder in a court of law. You were conscious of my presence that night in the graveyard, Margie?"

"Yes. I thought it was you. I knew no other man's presence had the power to thrill and impress me as yours did."

"I meant to impress you, Margaret. I brought all the strength of my will to bear on that object. I said to myself, she shall

know that I am near her, and yet my visible presence shall not be revealed to her. And now, can you guess why I was there?"

"Hardly."

"Love ought to tell you."

"It might tell me wrong."

"No, Margie. Never! You know that I have loved you from the moment I saw you first, and though for a long, long time I never dared to think you would ever be to me anything more than a bright beautiful vision to be worshipped afar off, yet it agonized me to think of giving you up to another. For after that it would be a sin to love you. When I heard you were to marry that man, I cannot tell you how I suffered. I set myself to ascertain if you cared for him. And I was satisfied beyond a doubt that you did not."

"You were correct. I did not."

"He was a villain of the deepest dye, Margie. I do not know as Arabel Vere sluned in ridding the earth of him. When I think but for her crime you would now have been his wife, I am tempted to consider her crime as a crime only in name. I am not so sure that she was not the instrument of a justly incensed Providence to work out the decree of destiny."

"O Archer! It was dreadful for him to die as he did. But what a life of misery it saved me from! I will not think of it. I leave it all."

"It is best to do so. But to explain my presence at Harrison Park that night. I went there hoping to catch a glimpse of you. I wanted to see you once more before you were lost to me forever. I did not desire to speak to you; I did not wish to disturb you in any way; but I wanted to see you before that man had a legal claim on you. I watched your window closely. I had found out which was your window from one of the servants, and I watched its light, which burned through the dusky twilight like the evening star. I wonder if you had a thought for me that night, Margie—your wedding night?"

"I did think of you—" she blushed, and hid her face on his shoulder—"I did think of you. I longed inexpressibly to fly to your side and be forever at rest!"

"My darling!" He kissed her fondly, and went on: "I saw you leave your room by the window and come down the garden path. I had felt that you would come. I was not surprised that you did. I had ex-

pected it. I followed you silently, saw you kneel by the grave of your parents, heard you call out upon your father for pity. O, how I loved and pitied you, Margie—but my tongue was tied—I had no right to speak—but I'd kiss your hand. Did you know it, Margie?"

"Yes."

"You recognized me, then? I meant you should. After that I hurried away. I was afraid to trust myself near you longer, lest I might be tempted to what I might repent. I fled away from the place, and knew nothing of the fearful deed done there until the papers announced it the next day."

"And I suspected you of the crime! O Archer! Archer! how could I ever have been so blind? How can you ever forgive me?"

"I want forgiveness, Margie. I doubted you. I thought you were false to me, and had fled with Castrani. That unfortunate glove confirmed you, I suppose. I dropped it, in my haste to escape without your observation, and afterward I expected to hear of it in connection with the finding of Linmere's body. I never knew what became of it until my wife displayed it, that day when she taunted me with my crime. Poor Alexandrine! She had the misfortune to love me, and after your renunciation, and your departure from New York—in those days when I deemed you false as fair—I offered her my hand. I thought perhaps she might be happier as my wife, and I felt that I owed her something for her devoted love. I tried to do my duty by her, but a man never can do that by his wife unless he loves her! That is his first duty. All lesser obligations will come easy, if his heart finds rest in her."

"You acted for what you thought was best, Archer."

"I did. Heaven knows I did. She died in coming to me to ask my forgiveness for the taunting words she had spoken at our last parting. I was cruel. I went away from her in pride and anger, and left behind me no means by which she could communicate with me. I deserved to suffer, and I have."

"And I also, Archer."

"My poor Margie! Do you know, dear, that it was the knowledge that you wanted me which was sending me home again? A month ago I saw Louis Castrani in Paris.

He told me everything. He was delicate enough about it, darling; you need not blush for any fear that he might have told me you were grieving for me; but he made me understand that my future might not be so dark as I had begun to regard it. He read to me the dying confession of Arabel Vere, and made clear many things regarding which I had previously been in the dark. Is all peace between us, Margie?"

"All is peace, Archer. And God is very good."

"He is. I thank him for it. And now I want to ask one thing more. I am not quite satisfied."

"Well?"

"Perhaps you will think it ill-timed—now, when we are surrounded by strangers, and our very lives perhaps in peril—but I cannot wait. I have spent precious moments enough in waiting. It has been very long, Margie, since I heard you say you loved me, and I want to hear the words again."

She looked up at him shyly.

"Archer, how do I know but you have changed?"

"You know I have not. I have loved but one woman—I shall love no other through time and eternity. And now, at last, after all the distress and the sorrow we have passed through, will you give me your promise to meet whatever else fortune and fate may have in store for us, by my side?"

She put her face up to his, and he kissed her lips.

"Yours always, Archer. I have never had one thought for any other."

So a second time were Archer Trevlyn and Margie Harrison betrothed.

On the ensuing day the storm abated, and the steamer made a swift passage to New York.

Doctor and Mrs. Elbert were a little disappointed at the sudden termination of their bridal tour, but consoled themselves with the thought that they could try it over again in the spring.

Trevlyn remained in the city to adjust some business affairs which had suffered from his long absence, and Margie and her friends went up to her old home. He was to follow them thither on the ensuing day.

And so it happened that once more Margie sat in her old familiar chamber dressing for the coming of Archer Trevlyn.

What should she put on? She remembered the rose-colored dress she had laid away that dreadful night so long ago—laid it away, and with it all her hopes of happiness. But now the rose-colored dreams had come back, why not wear the rose-colored dress? She went to the wardrobe where she had locked it away. Some of the servants had found the key out in the grass, where she had flung it that night, and fitted it to the lock. It had rusted there, and required all her strength to turn it. She lifted the dress and the beautiful pearl ornaments; and held them up to the light. The dress was fresh and unfaded, but it was full four years behind the style! Well, what did that matter? She had a fancy for wearing it. She wanted to take up her life just where she had left it when she put off that dress.

To the unbounded horror of Florine, she arrayed herself in the old-fashioned dress, and waited for her lover. And she had not long to wait. She heard his well-remembered step in the hall, and a moment after she was folded in his arms.

At Christmas there was a bridal at Harrison Park. The day was clear and cloudless—the air almost as balmy as the airs of spring. Such a Christmas had not been known for years.

"A glorious day for a wedding!" said Mrs. Sullivan to the cook; "I never saw the likes of it but once before in my life, and that was when my brother Teddy was married to Patty O'Brien. Ah, but wasn't that a day taken right out of Eden? And Teddy and Patty have lived and prospered, and

have always kept two elegant pigs, and had the finest hens and chickens in all the country. Ah, but there's no use in telling me that there's nothing in a wedding-day!"

"You're right there," said old Peter, "I remember the other day when the wedding was to have come off, Mistress Sullivan, but it didn't come at all. And if you mind, it rained pouring."

"Only a drizzle, Peter—only a drizzle," said Mrs. Sullivan. "But a drizzle is a great deal worse than a pouring rain. A deal worse. It means a weeping wife. Well, Mistress Margaret will have a long life and a happy one—the Lord bless her!—if there's anything in omens."

So the servants gossipped, and the sun shone brightly, and the soft winds sighed through the leafless trees. And Margie was married, and not a cloud came between her and the sun.

Peace and content dwelt with Archer Trevlyn and his wife in their beautiful home. Having suffered, they knew better how to be grateful for, and to appreciate, the blessings at last bestowed upon them.

At their happy fireside there comes to sit sometimes, of an evening, a quiet grave-faced man, whose strong right arm lies mouldering on a far-away battle-field—a sacrifice offered on the shrine of freedom. A man whom Archer Trevlyn and his wife love as a dear brother, and prize above all other earthly friends. And beside Louis Castrani, Leo sits, serene and contemplative, enjoying a green old age in peace and plenty. Castrani will never marry, but sometime in the hereafter, I think he will have his recompense.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE BY THE MILL.

A TEXAS STORY.

BY CLARA LECLERC.

And when they talk of it, they shake their heads,
And whisper one another in the ear;
And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,
And he that hears makes fearful action,
With wrinkled brow, with nods, with rolling eyes.

SHAKESPEARE.

"HAS some one really taken the mill house?" And the speaker, a tall athletic young man, gave his head a significant jerk in the direction of a long, low, weather-stained and rambling old house, while his eyes sought his companion's face.

"Yes, the house has been taken by a young man and his wife from the States. He has leased the mill, but it's my opinion he'll pack out of *that* house pretty quick, after stopping a night or two *inside*. Catch me spending a night in *that* place!" And this speaker tossed his head towards the low dark-looking house, and a kind of superstitious awe gathered upon his frank open face. "Why, man alive! I wouldn't do it for a hull hatful of these *yellow-shiners*." And he tossed up a couple of gold pieces, each marked "Five Dollars."

"Neither would I, Larry; but then, we had best say as little as possible before the new-comers. When will they be here?"

"Any hour, I suppose, as the wagons went to meet them yesterday for their traps and things. I don't think they have any children; that's one good thing, for they can hustle out o' there any minute."

"A dismal day to take possession of a home like that." And the younger of the couple again glanced significantly towards the really uncanny-looking house; then, turning their backs upon the object of their conversation, they entered the mill, and amid the dull roar and whirr of machinery inside, and the monotonous drip drip of the rain without, the day wore on.

"They have come, John!"

"Let me see! let me see!" And several eager faces peered through the gloom, and descried the mud-bespattered hack before the door of the house, and heard a clear young voice, through the rain and darkness, ask:

"Is this the place, Freddie?"

"Yes dear." The next moment a tall figure sprang to the ground, and reaching up his arms, soon placed a small woman on the wet ground beside him. "Run in now, before you get cold and damp."

As the small figure turned to enter the house, several willing hands offered to bring in trunks, and make a fire for the travellers.

"Thank you," replied the gentleman. "We are quite worn out, and will be glad of your assistance."

By ten o'clock the "traps and things" had been temporarily arranged, and with a hand-lamp the young wife explored the great barnlike rooms—only three in number—and peered into shadowy nooks; while the workmen gave each other knowing glances, and cast looks of pity upon the young couple.

"Eleven o'clock! Jiminy! I must be a gittin' from here, ef it's that late!" muttered one of the men, as the little timepiece rang out the hour. "Come, boys! 'Night, Mr. Greyson; 'night, marm, pleasant dreams to you!" And the crowd hustled out of the door, and each one seemed to give his feet an extra shake as he crossed the doorsill.

"Twelve o'clock!" The tones rang out clear and musical through the great room, and the young wife, turning restlessly on her pillow, reached over and passed her little hand over the face of her sleeping husband. "Fred! O Freddie! are you asleep? Somehow I *can't* go to sleep, tired as I am. I am all nerves—I have the *queerest* feelings, dear. Wont you talk to me just a little?"

"O Carrie, what *nonsense*, when I am so sleepy!" And one strong arm reached out and drew the little trembling figure to his side, and held it there. "Why, child, you are all of a tremble. What is the matter?"

"I don't know. Hush! what noise is that?"

A dull thud, thud, thud! The strokes were regular, and seemed as if some one was beating another.

"Do you hear it, Fred?"

"Rats!" muttered the sleepy Fred.

Again thud, thud, thud!

"O mercy! it seems to be in the next room!" murmured the nervous little woman.

"There! I certainly *did* hear a shriek and moan!"

"No, 'tis only the wind and rain sobbing and wailing around the house corners, I reckon."

"Now, what is that I hear up stairs?" And the excited little creature sat up in bed, and listened to the strange sounds overhead. Thipity-thump, thipity-thump! "Sounds like some one with a wooden leg or crutch. Queer rats in this old barn. I must make my little terrier clear them out." And with a shiver she crept back under the cover, and into the arms that were opened to receive her, though the owner was wrapped in sleep.

"Haint you 'ons heard strange noises o' nights since you 'ons got here?"

The speaker, a very old lady with many a wrinkle seaming her still comely face, peered into the eyes of the young stranger. This was Carrie Greyson's first visitor; and the old lady's voice sank into a low mysterious tone as she repeated the question.

"Yes, the rats are fearful!" answered the young wife.

"*Rats* indeed! Ef that aint a good un, my name aint Patty Harris! Honey,"—and she placed one fat wrinkled hand on Mrs. Greyson's shoulder, while her voice seemed filled with awe and fear—"this house is haunted!"

And having delivered herself of this startling information, she gazed triumphantly at the young wife, expecting her to give vent to exclamations of wild alarm.

"Pshaw, Mrs. Harris! you certainly do not believe in such things?"

"Don't Mrs. Harris me, honey. I am Aunt Patty."

"Well, Aunt Patty, then."

"Of course I believe in it, for 'tis as true as the Gospel. Lud, honey, you see I was here that night when it all happened."

"When what happened, Aunt Patty?"

The look of amusement gave place to one of interest upon Mrs. Greyson's sunny face.

"Come here, I have something to show you first." And the old lady tottered

across the floor, leading the younger. "There! do you see that?" she exclaimed, as they stood within the front room, and she pointed to a huge black spot upon the otherwise spotless floor.

"Of course I see it, and I have been at work on it ever since I got here, trying to rub it up. 'Tis a very unsightly stain of some kind."

"Yes, yes, honey, that's all true; an-unsightly stain of *some kind*." And the old woman shook her head in a sad reflective manner.

"I'll be sixty-five year old, come Christmas-day, and all that happened when I was a little gel between thirteen and fourteen. Honey, I saw that spot flooded with *warm human blood*! Would you like to hear the story?"

"Yes, indeed I should, Aunt Patty; come, let me lead you back into the other room to the fire." For the old lady was trembling with cold and excitement.

"Well, when I was thirteen, just that day, 'cause it was on a Christmas, and my good mother always made me a cream-cake on that day,"—this the old lady said as she seated herself in a large armchair, took off her glasses, and wiped them with the corner of her dark calico apron, and then put them again in place—"yes, that day father came in from the mill to dinner, and said, 'Well, old lady, we'll have strangers in the mill house *afore long*.' We always called it the mill house, as it had been built expressly for whoever might have the mill in charge; sometimes it was one man, and agin another. 'You don't say! Who is it?' asked mother.

"'A man by the name of George Hurst has leased the mill; he, his mother and cousin are to be here to-morrow.' 'How did you hear it, Henry?' 'Will Carter brung the news from town,'

"The next day, just afore dark, here they come, sure enough. I was playing about before the mill door, and had a good chance to see 'em. First the man, a great, tall, stout man clumb out, and got upon the ground; and as he did so, I saw with horror that he had only one leg. He placed a crutch under his left arm, and with the other hand helped out two ladies. The old lady looked sad and homesick; her hair was gray, and put back smoothlike beneath her bonnet.

"The young gel—well, she was the prettiest creatur' that I had ever seen in my

life; she was tall and slim, had pretty feet and white hands; her eyes were large and dark, her skin dusky-like, with rosy cheeks and lips. But her hair was her greatest beauty. She had on a broad-brimmed hat with a scarlet ribbon round it, and a scarlet feather fastened in one side and hanging almost to her shoulder; and her hair had slipped out from the comb that held it in place, and fell from under her hat in great black curls, as big as my arm, way down to her knees. As soon as she touched the ground the man turned round fierce, like he was mad, and snapped, 'Come, Imogene! don't stand there to be stared at. Come, mother, come into the house.' And he stumped on in front of them, and opened the door; while one and another of the crowd of workmen at the mill door exclaimed, 'Well, ef that's the boss, I don't think I shall like him. I wouldn't speak to my old mother, or cousin, either, for that matter, as he did, for all the money in Texas.'

"Yes, that was the boss, George Hurst, and he proved to be a strict harsh master. He was a good-looking man—or would have been but for an awful frown he always wore upon his otherwise handsome face. His hair was a reddish black, his beard also; his eyes large, and of a steely gray. I was always afraid of him, and very often when mother would send me to the mill with a message to father, he'd gaze at me hard with those great eyes of his'n, and snap out, 'What now, Patty!' as if it was any concern of his'n.

"It turned out that Imogene Dupree was his cousin, and he was her guardeen. Anybody could see with half an eye that he was very fond of her, in his savage way. And old Mrs. Hurst dropped a hint one day that Imogene would sometime be her daughter, and yet she always watched the young thing in a kind of sad pitying way whenever George was near.

"One night about six months later, when father came in to supper he brought a stranger with him; and, child as I was, I was struck with his fair handsome face; hair like curls of gold, and eyes as blue as wood violets. Ah, honey, he was as pretty as a picture; and as I sat on the doorstep after supper, and gazed up into his face while he talked with father, I thought, 'O my eye, don't I wish I was grown, so he could be my beau!' I heard them talkin' about gettin' work at the mill, and I wondered to my-

self ef that man, so finely dressed, with hands so soft and white, really wanted work. And then I listened, and heard Walter Wyman—that was the stranger's name—say that he had lost all of his property through the trickery of a pretended friend, and had tried in several places to get a situation, but had failed; that if he could get something to do for several months, he thought he would like to stay a while. I then heard father say that George Hurst was not much of a scribe, and that they needed some one at the mill to write down all the grain received and flour sent out; and that he heard the boss wishing for some one to attend to all that. 'So let me finish my smoke, and I'll step over to Hurst's with you, and see what can be done.'

"And so it was all arranged. Walter Wyman remained as George Hurst's secretary—he, Hurst, I mean, was fond of big dictionary words; and they took him to board at the mill house, and things went on very quietly for a time. But at last things began to look dark. I could hear George Hurst talking sharp and spiteful-like to his secretary; and once I heard Hurst tell father he 'didn't thank him for bringing that *meddler* and *interloper* into the concern;' to which father made no reply, for he knew, and we all knew, that Walter Wyman was a thousand times more of a gentleman than George Hurst ever dared to be.

"It got noised about at last that Imogene and her cousin George were to be married at Christmas. Mrs. Hurst was at work on pretty underclothes, and prettier dresses, but Imogene wandered about, seeming like one very unhappy. She often crossed the bridge, and strolled away off among the trees and bushes on the other side of the pond, where she would remain for hours. No one seemed to notice this at first—no one but me; child as I was, I often followed her at a distance, and when she imagined that she was hidden from every one, I have seen her cast herself upon the ground and cry and sob, wring her hands and moan, and often have I heard her utter these words: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' I knew not at the time what she meant, but afterwards I knew.

"By-and-by George Hurst began to look at her in a savage way as she passed the mill, and would call out in a loud harsh voice, 'Where to now, my lady?' And she would reply in a low trembling voice, while

a frightened look crept over her pale sad face, 'Only across the millstream for a little walk, Cousin George.'

"*Cousin George!* now that is a good one! And he would laugh a short hateful laugh, while the wishful blue eyes of the secretary would follow the trim figure passing on the footbridge.

"Three weeks before Christmas came a heavy rain, lasting five or six days. The whole earth was flooded with water. The millstream seemed like a mighty river, a rushin' and foam'n' along, a whirlin' limbs and dead logs like so many feathers adown stream. But on the sixth day the clouds lifted somewhat, and about three o'clock in the afternoon the sun peeped out, jest the least bit; and directly, who should come along the path before our door, but Miss Imogene, overshoes and wrappings on? going for her lonely walk, I knew.

"I saw Walter Wyman standing in the mill door, and heard him exclaim, 'You surely are not going to try to cross the pond this evening, Miss Imogene? The bridge is not very firm, at best, and it sways with the current now. The water is rising rapidly. In less than two hours that bridge will be floating down stream. Do not be so rash, I beg!'

"'I must go, Walter—Mr. Wyman. I want to think, and the house stifles me.'

"'Well, let me try the bridge first. If it should give way I can swim, you cannot.'

"He walked the whole length of the narrow bridge and back again; then taking Imogene by the hand, he led her safely over. When he reached the mill door again he turned and gazed after the form fast losing itself among the trees and stunted bushes. For over an hour Walter Wyman sat before the door of the mill, scarce taking his eyes from the heavin' and risin' waters, and the awayin' bridge whereon must cross Imogene on her return.

"'Why does she not come?' I heard him mutter, as I ran over to the mill for a pan of chicken-feed. 'If she does not soon come, I'll go after her.'

"Just then George Hurst put his head out of the mill house door and shouted, 'What are you doing at the mill this time of day, Wyman? I want you here to figure up some accounts for me.'

"The mill stopped at twelve every Wednesday for a half holiday, but George Hurst always kept his secretary at work, ef he

could possibly find anything for him to do. With a deep moan Walter Wyman once more cast his eyes up the path across the water, then started for the house, stopping every two minutes to look back. He stopped on the doorstep and gazed eagerly up the path once more, but no Imogene was in sight.

"I stood before our door watching him, and saw him enter the mill house; then, child as I was, I determined to watch for Miss Imogene, and tell him when I saw her coming. So I seated myself on the doorstep, cold and wet as it was, and gazed out upon the path beyond the bridge.

"Ten, twenty minutes went by, and then mother called, 'Come, Patty, set the table for supper afore it gits dark.' To hear was to obey, although I murmured something about watching for Miss Imogene.

"I had laid the cloth, had put on the cups and sassers, and was lifting a pile of plates from the corner shelf, when I heard a wild shrill scream. With a crash the plates fell to the floor, and I darted out of the house, but Walter Wyman was before me. Great heavens! that awful sight! The bridge was borne along by the rush of waters, a whirlin' round like a mere plank, and standing upon the whirlin' mass was Imogene Dupree, her pale face raised to heaven, her hands clasped, and one wild cry after another breaking from her ashen lips. Swift as thought Walter Wyman had rushed down the stream, and calling to Imogene, 'Be brave, and keep perfectly still, *my darling!*' he waited until the floatin' bridge reached a bend in the stream, then springing high in air, he gave a mighty leap and landed upon the bridge beside Imogene. And then we all witnessed a touchin' scene that we never forgot—one that caused George Hurst to gnash his teeth and curse like a madman; for Imogene, his intended bride, cast her arms about Walter Wyman's neck; while he clasped her close in his arms, and pressed kisses on her lips, cheeks and hair.

"'The cursed villain! he shall pay dear for those kisses!' I heard George Hurst mutter.

"By this time the workmen had gathered all the stout ropes they could find, and making fast a long hook to one end, they threw it on the bridge, and Walter made the hook fast by slippin' it over the beam of the bridge; then those on shore drove a large iron bar into the ground, and passin'

the rope across it, began to haul in; but the bridge refused to come to shore. It was turned lengthwise, and they battled manfully, but it would not start.

"Just steady it as much as you can, boys, and I'll try to bring Miss Imogene ashore. There! steady now!" And, turning to Imogene, he spoke to her in a low voice, then pressed a long kiss upon her lips; and once again her two arms went up and clasped his neck, and remained there while he raised her in his arms; and calling out, 'Steady now!' walked to the edge of the bridge with his precious burden in his arms, and giving the spring, landed on the ground; but as he did so his foot caught upon a snag; he tottered, dropped Imogene as he fell, and struck his head against a large log that had been washed ashore.

"George Hurst caught Imogene as she fell, and givin' her a rough shake, cried, harshly, 'Go to the house now, my lady! You have created scene enough for one day; my turn comes next.'

"It was with difficulty that the men prevented him from striking Walter Wyman, as he lay so cold and lifeless upon the wet ground. Old Mrs. Hurst burst into tears and cried out, 'For shame, George Hurst! May God forgive me, but the time has come when I am ashamed of my child.' Then growing calmer, she went up to him, and placin' her hand upon his arm, while her pale sad face looked very stern, she said in a low voice, 'I think you had best get on your horse, and go to town for a few days; you are not needed here just now, and all will get on better for your absence. Go, lest I may live to curse the day that gave you birth!'

"Without a word George Hurst turned away from his mother; and as the crowd of workmen hastened to lift their favorite from the ground and bear him to the house, George Hurst passed them on his coal black horse, and, as he rode on, gave a low mocking laugh.

"On the third night after Walter Wyman had received his hurt, I came over to bring him some nice seedcake, jam and cream that mother had prepared for him. I came in just here at the back door, and found no one in this room but Mrs. Hurst. She was sitting before the fire, with her knittin' resting on her lap, while the strangest, scared look was on her face that I ever saw. 'What have you got there, Patty? Some-

thing nice for Mr. Wyman? Your mother is very kind, I am sure. Take it in the front room; they are in there.'

"Yes, Walter Wyman was lying on a cot near the right-hand corner, and Imogene was kneeling on a rug at his side, with her beautiful hair down; while he passed his long white fingers tenderly through the rich heavy mass, and now and then lifted a heavy curl to his lips. They were so wrapped up in each other that they did not notice me until I stood just before them.

"'Ah, little Patty, is it you?' And he lifted his handsome face to look at me, and makin' me stoop down, gave me a kiss on my cheek for bringin' him such a nice supper. How well I remember everything connected with that night!

"'I've had one supper, Patty, but I must try yours—that is'—and he glanced into Imogene's happy face—'if my darling will feed me.'

"'Of course I shall; to hear is to obey!' And takin' the things out of my hands, she arranged them upon a little stand by the cot, tucked a napkin under his chin, took up the cream-jug and poured the cream over the jam, placed a seedcake between his white fingers, and laughingly said, 'Begin, sir!'

"I stood by and watched their merriment for a long time. Now he would make her taste, just 'to sweeten it,' he said, and then place the spoon to his lips. How happy they were! At last I sat down on a little low chair before the fire, and in watching them I must have dropped asleep; for by-and-by I heard the clock strike eleven, and, rubbing my eyes, I looked around, and if you'll believe me, there they were at their fun, Imogene makin' him beg and pay for each spoonful.

"'Now, sir, what will you give for this spoonful?' she merrily cried; and, catching at her hands, he drew her down and kissed her rosy red lips.

"'There, that is the currency I intend to pay you in always, my darling! Do you know?'—and here his voice grew serious—'I would be willing to die, almost, now that I know you love me? I would give my life freely in payment for the happiness of the last three days, rather than to have lived without the knowledge of your precious love.' And drawing her down again, he pressed loving kisses upon her sweet mouth.

"'What a pretty tableau! Am sorry

that I shall have to spoil it!" spoke a harsh well-known voice at the door; and with a start the lovers turned, and saw George Hurst!

"Child as I was, I screamed in a low scared way when I saw his face. Turning the key in the lock, he then removed it and put it in his pocket. Then crossing the room to the other door, he did the same.

"What is the meaning of that, Cousin George?" And Imogene turned her stricken face towards him.

"This is your answer, my lady! And standing over the low cot, he twisted his large fingers in the beautiful golden hair of Walter Wyman, and jerked him to a sitting posture.

"Why, Hurst! don't be so rough. Remember a fellow that has had his senses knocked out of him don't get well in a hurry."

"They don't, eh? Well, I have a little account to settle with you, and I had just as well begin." And with that he jerked him off the cot, and commenced beating him with his crutch.

"Aunt Mary! Aunt Mary! for Heaven's sake, call help! George is killing Walter! And the voice but a few minutes before filled with laughter, rose to wild shrieks, as she flew at George Hurst and struck at him with her puny arms. But alas! the murderer had done his work; the first or second blow upon the temple had sent the soul of Walter Wyman into the presence of his God; but the fiend, not satisfied, dropped upon the floor beside the lifeless body of his victim, and continued beating it until pools of blood covered the floor.

"Ah! for every kiss you get a blow. I counted the kisses, now you count the blows!" And he chuckled in a most awful manner.

"Poor Imogene! she had sunk down on the floor by the body of her lover, tearin' her hair, beatin' her hands wildly until they were covered with blood; and all the while she screamed, 'O my love! my love! my dead, dead love!'

"At the first wild cry for help Mrs. Hurst had sprung to the door, but finding it fastened, I heard her run to the back door and scream 'Help! help! Murder! murder!' But it was late, everybody abed; and all the while she screamed, 'O my love! my love! my dead, dead love!' and last, that awful hideous object with the blood pouring from his neck, as he lay upon his bed up stairs;

reached it George Hurst got up, took the key to the middle door from his pocket, and as the front door fell in with a crash, I heard him go thipity-thump up the stairs into his own room.

"O heavens! shall I ever shut out the picture! That pale handsome face looked very lifelike, with the exception of one spot on the temple; but the body was beaten into an awful mass. O, the sight was full of horror! And there that awfully mutilated body had to lie in that pool of blood until the coroner could be summoned. In the meantime, a guard had been placed at the foot of the stairs in this room to prevent George Hurst's escape. But it seemed as if he did not think of escape, for we heard the regular thipity-thump, thipity-thump through the long hours of the night.

"Mrs. Hurst and mother tried to get Imogene to leave the body; but no, she remained; and when the coroner and his jury arrived they found her thus.

"Their verdict was soon given—'Willful murder committed upon the person of Walter Wyman, by one George Hurst.' And with that, an officer with a warrant stepped softly up the stairs—where George Hurst's well-known steps were sounding—expecting to surprise him; but we soon heard his swift footsteps on the stairs, and his deathly pale face glared into the room, while he gasped, 'O Heaven! what a night of horrors!' and waved his hand in the direction of the stairs, towards which excited feet rushed—mine among the number. It seemed as if I *must* go; and when I got to the door and heard his regular thipity-thump, I was sure that I would see his angry face mocking at us. No form walked the room, but, extended on the bed, his throat cut from ear to ear, the razor still grasped in his right hand, and his bloody crutch pressed fondly to his breast with his left, lay George Hurst, the murderer and suicide!

"With a great cry I turned and fled, and never stopped until I had buried my head in the pillows of my own little bed at home. O, how I shook and quivered with fear! I could see the whole awful sight—pale, handsome, mutilated Walter Wyman lying in his pool of blood; the stricken form of Imogene Dupree as she knelt at his side, and hear her wild cry, 'O my love! my love! my dead, dead love!' and last, that awful hideous object with the blood pouring from his neck, as he lay upon his bed up stairs;

while the queer strokes of his sound foot and his crutch kept pace upon the floor!

"Two days later the murdered and the murderer were buried side by side in a little graveyard not far from here. Imogene would not leave the coffin of her dead lover until kind hands bore her gently away; and when she heard the first clods of earth fall upon it, she screamed, 'O let me go! let me go to Walter!'

"Poor Mrs. Hurst! her grief found no expression. With lovin' care she watched over the wretched Imogene, and was makin' all haste to settle up her son's business, and leave this awful house, for she said she could not bear to stay here. Imogene's mind seemed perfectly crazed. She would sit for hours with her eyes closed, and hands locked on her breast; then starting up with a wild shriek, would cast herself upon that awful spot darkened with her lover's lifeblood, and moans and cries the most awful and heartrending would issue from her lips.

"One night—the one she was to have been the wife of her cousin—she awoke her aunt, in the dead of the night, with her wails and cries; and sitting up in bed, Mrs. Hurst saw her upon her knees by that spot, her head bowed to the floor, and heard her cry, 'Yes, Walter, my love, *my love*, I am coming!' And risin', she walked swiftly towards the door, and throwin' it open, rushed out into a storm of rain and wind, with no clothin' save her nightdress. With wild alarm Mrs. Hurst sprang from her bed, threw a wrapper around her, thrust her feet into her slippers, and followed out after her, calling my father to come to her aid. Soon dark forms with lanterns could be seen moving about in the storm. They shouted 'Imogene! Imogene!' until they were so hoarse they could not speak; no Imogene could be found! All the next day, and the next, the search went on, but all in vain; and at last it was concluded that poor Imogene had joined her lover in the spirit-land, but how and when they could not tell. Poor heartbroken Mrs. Hurst left the State, and returned to her old home in North Carolina.

"Years went by; the old mill house, with its low uncanny looks and haunted rooms, was an object of fear to us young folks. One after another tried to live here, but the dark crimson spot staring into their faces,

the dull thud, thud, 'thud of blows, the faint moans of the dying man, the shrill screams of the bereft maiden, and the thip-ty-thump of the murderer overhead, forced them to leave the house.

"A few years later there came just such a storm of wind and rain as had caused the mill-house tragedy. The millstream was again a ragin' flood, castin' up boughs and broken bits of timber; and one morning after the storm had calmed, father came runnin' into the house, his face pale and voice tremblin', as he cried, 'Mother, the millstream has given up its secret! Come and see.'

"Yes, there cast up by the waters, and lying on the shore, was a skeleton; and full well we all knew that we looked upon all that was left of poor Imogene Dupree. We buried her beside her lover, and tried to forget the wild sad story of her and hers. But never a wild night comes but what I bury my head in the bedclothes and pray, 'O God, teach me to forget that awful scene!'

Here the old lady paused, and wiped away the tears that coursed down her wrinkled cheeks. Carrie Greyson had carried her handkerchief to her eyes more than once during the old lady's pathetic story; and now she spoke for the first time since the commencement.

"O Aunt Patty, how very very sad! It must be trying to you, for she—poor Imogene—and her noble lover were known and loved by you all. Of course this house must, to you, seem to be accursed. But I am not afraid at all, Aunt Patty. 'Tis true your story will make me very sad at times; but the thought of fear will never enter my mind. Must you go? Come in often to see me."

"Yes, honey, 'tis gittin' dusk, and I wouldn't be here when it begins for all the gold in Texas. Good-by, honey. Come to see Aunt Patty." And with that the old lady made her way slowly down the steps, and out into the thickening winter twilight; while the young wife cast several sticks upon the fire, stirred it into a merry blaze, trimmed the lamp, and began to prepare her evening meal, listening with love's quick ears to the well-known steps that brought her Fred home to her, awaiting him there—all alone in the *haunted house*.

TRANSPANTED.

BY HELEN LUQUEER.

CHAPTER I.

"MARY ANN! Mary Ann!" screamed a shrill and discordant voice.

Mrs. Gager stood in the doorway, shading her eyes with a great red hand, and scanning the garden path which led down to a meadow lot, rich with its emerald carpeting, dotted with golden buttercups and dandelions. Over a stile and far away ran a woodland path leading to cool shady retreats, where sparkling waterfalls and murmuring brooks made perpetual liquid music—a sort of organ for the warbling birds.

"Dear me! I can't keep track of that argal, do what I will. She pesters the life out of me."

Mrs. Gager turned back into her neat little kitchen, and began her preparations for dinner; and her husband, a little, corpulent red-faced man—remarkably good-natured, who had just returned from the fields—came to the rescue, and lifting up his voice, sent out a call for "Mary Ann" which echoed and reechoed among the hills, and brought that damsel from some secluded retreat in a trice.

"Whar on arth have yer bin tew, Mary Ann?" asked her mother, as the girl came in, with her sunbonnet dangling by one string, and her cheeks all aglow with health and beauty, while her black eyes sparkled like diamonds.

"Only down after ferns, mother, to press. Aren't they lovely?" And she displayed an apronful of the carefully-culled treasures.

"Ferns? Wal, I'll jest give up now! You are eternally racin' the fields and woods fer some sort of trash or nuther. Alvirn'll have ter come hum" (Elvira was an elder sister who was out at service), "that's all thar is about it! fer yer haint worth shucks, and I'm e'enermost worked ter death."

"I didn't think it was so late, mother," replied Mary Ann, as she bustled about, setting the table.

"Here's er letter for yer, mother," interrupted Father Gager, coming into the house at the moment; "and drat me, if it haint ther queerest thing I ever saw. It's got a

rim of black all around it, and a great spatter of some kind of black wax ter stick it together with."

"Whar did you git it?"

"Gibson's hired man left it. He's bin over ter town this mornin'."

"O father! some one is dead," exclaimed Mary Ann, as she came out of the pantry with an armful of crockery. "Miss Dale, the school-teacher who boarded here last summer, got just such a letter from some one whom she said was in mourning, and that it was fashionable to have the paper and envelops in mourning also."

"Poppyquash!" contemptuously returned Mr. Gager, as he proceeded to open the letter. "Ye haint any idee that we have got any such highfalutan kinfolks as them air?"

"Why, father!" answered his wife, "thar's sister Jane Judson. She was older nor me, you know, and married a city feller, and I haint seen nor heard from her in twenty-five long years. The man she married was a rich aristocrat, and she was mighty proud, and didn't ever come ter own any on us ergin. And we thought as how if she could be so onnatural, we would gin her up. But here comes the men, and dinner is ready. Mary Ann kin wait on ther table; so jest gin me ther letter, and I'll go inter ther other room and read it all alone by myself."

Half an hour later she returned with very red eyes, and as the kitchen was cleared of the "men folks," who were lounging out beneath the great shade trees the remainder of their nooning, the contents of the letter were communicated to her husband.

It was from Jane Judson, and told that she had been recently left a childless widow; that she was in ill health, and needed some companion; that if out of their large family they had a daughter to whom they would be willing to give up all right, she would be glad to adopt her; do by her in all things as if she were her own, and at her death make her heir to all her property.

The entire afternoon was spent by the

farmer and his wife in discussing the offer. It was a very good one; that they had decided. It would not do to let it slip into the hands of strangers, but the question as to which should be given up was a momentous one.

"Thar's Alvira," said the old man, "she'd jump at ther chance; but then, yer couldn't make a lady out on her no more than yer could out of thar old brindle cow. She's a good gal at a country frolic, or at work in a hayfield or kitchen, but bless me! she'd be only a laffin' stock in a city parlor with that big hand and foot of her'n. Thar's Araminta, but then, she's freckled, and got a red head, and besides, she's ther baby."

"What's ther use, father, of yer goin' on and enumeratin', when it's clear ter us both that Mary Ann is ther one ter go? She haint er bit like any of ther rest on 'em, but as like what her Aunt Jane was as two peas in er pod. I always told you so. It's books, and drawin', and paintin', and embroidery, and pressin' of fern leaves and autumn leaves, as she calls them. And she's always er dreamin', and ramblin' in ther woods, and usin' big words about the things she finds there. I declar', I don't see who she gets it all from."

"Why, out of newspapers and novels, of course," replied her husband, puffing away at his pipe. "Wal, yer must decide for yerself, mother. She's jest as pooty er little critter as ever trod shoe leather; and if she's ter be thar one it haint sayin' that we're tew give her up entirely. Aunt Jane haint goin' ter live eternally, that's sartin."

Mrs. Gager dried her eyes, and called Mary Ann in from the summer kitchen, where she was washing dishes with Araminta, and communicated their decision. Tears of delight flashed and trembled in the girl's fine black eyes, and the rich color came and went like dancing sunbeams in her cheeks. Was she in reality to see the great city of New York, live in one of its fine mansions, ride in a carriage, have servants at her call, and all the advantages of culture her soul craved?

It was no wonder her little head was completely turned by the brilliant prospect. It never occurred to her that her dear country home, with all its lovely surroundings—the grove with its many shady dells and cool rocky grottos—was to be given up, perhaps forever; that at least it would

be years a place for only memory to visit; that the new life and scenes would entirely unfit her to enjoy the old again; that all her tastes and feelings, even her very self, would change; that she could never retrace her steps, and be as innocent and free as the butterfly she had so closely resembled while revelling in the beauties of nature. O no! she gave no thought to such things.

Aunt Jane's offer was accepted, and a draft, so large as to almost take away the good farmer's breath, was forwarded for Mary Ann's outfit, and to defray her travelling expenses. So one lovely midsummer morning she was driven by her father in the little one-horse waggon to the nearest station, and placed in a railway car, which soon whirled her away from her native hills.

Notwithstanding her poor health, Mrs. Judson met her niece at the depot, and at once recognized her by the description sent by her mother, and a striking likeness to herself. Like one in a dream, the young girl sat beside the elegant lady in the magnificent carriage, and was rapidly driven to her new home. How vast and grand the rooms appeared! Her imagination had never pictured anything one-half so beautiful.

For the first few weeks the poor child shed many tears in secret—the offspring of a homesick heart. But she gradually became accustomed to her new life, and, as her aunt had at once procured a governess, she soon became absorbed in her studies, and visions of her childhood's home occupied her thoughts less by day or her dreams by night.

She was but fifteen, and the work of fitting her for society progressed rapidly for two years at home. But as Mrs. Judson's health continued to fail, the physicians prescribed a sea voyage. It was then decided that they must go abroad for a more genial climate, where it was hoped the invalid might be benefited. So they travelled (with a small retinue of servants) for another two years, everywhere seeking for that which no money could purchase. Famous watering-places were visited, but all to no purpose; and one day in June, in a little hamlet at the foot of a snow-crowned mountain of Switzerland, in a dilapidated inn, poor Mrs. Judson died.

She had grown very deeply attached to her niece, who had developed into a lovely

specimen of womanhood, and as the spirit was about leaving the shattered tenement, whispered to her:

"Mary, my dear child, it grieves me sadly to leave you alone in a land of strangers, but God's will be done. Into his holy keeping I commit you, and my own weary spirit. It matters nothing to me where my body is laid. I shall sleep as sweetly here in this peaceful valley as at home in Greenwood."

She paused, struggled for breath for a moment, and then resumed:

"It has been a cherished dream with me to see you settled in life, with some one to love and protect you when I am gone. I have written to Mr. Van Ness and his family, who have promised to take charge of you when they return home. After I am gone, you had better join them; that is, as soon as you can receive a reply to my letter. Kiss me, darling. I would sleep."

With her hand clasped in that of her loving niece, she entered the sleep that knows no waking. But so silently and quietly did she pass away, that it was only when the hand had grown cold that Mary Gager realized that she was indeed alone among strangers.

A week had passed wearily to the poor girl after her aunt's remains had been consigned to the grave in the village cemetery, and still there was no news from the friends to whom Mrs. Judson had appealed in the last days of her life for the care and protection of her charge.

One evening Mary went, as was her custom, to place a wreath of sweet-breathed flowers upon the grave of her aunt, and as she turned to leave the sacred spot, she was startled by discovering a tall form leaning upon the rustic gate of the enclosure. Weak and ill from her recent grief, she was so disturbed by finding herself alone with a stranger in that isolated spot, and the only means of egress barred by him, that she had barely strength to totter to a seat and sink upon it as objects began to fade from her sight. But how long she remained in that half-swoon she could never tell. She only knew that a familiar voice was calling to her in tender tones, while a strong arm supported her drooping form.

"I greatly fear I have frightened you," said Mortimer Van Ness, as soon as his companion became herself again. "The very hour my mother received your aunt's

letter I started for this place, followed by the rest of the family, who will shortly be here. But for repeated delays, dear Miss Gager, I should have been with you much sooner." He drew her arm within his own as she rose, and continued, "We most deeply sympathize with you, and grieve that we could not have been present to assist in your great trial."

The words were commonplace enough, but the voice and manner were eloquent with feeling, and a strange sense of comfort and protection crept into Mary's bereaved heart as they slowly wended their way home.

The very next day Mrs. Van Ness and her three daughters, a courier and three servants, arrived, and the lady, although a bundle of pride and aristocracy, took to her motherly heart the plebeian daughter of Farmer Gager—unknowing, however, of such origin. That the tall slight girl she was to chaperone, whose manners and bearing were refinement itself, with a dash of hauteur which gave her a distinguished air, with such slender white hands, had ever been employed washing dishes in an old farmhouse, she had not the most remote idea.

But Mary had not entirely lost the manner of coloring divinely now and then, just enough to show how rich and healthy was the blood that flowed within her veins, though her eyes had less of dancing light, were less shy, had greater depths of expression, and just now there was a sort of misty splendor about them, born of sorrow, that was enchanting. Young, rich and beautiful, it was no wonder that the worldly Mrs. Van Ness saw in her a fine match for her son, or that he should dream sweet dreams of their united lives; and that upon the last night of their stay in the little hamlet, upon the rustic seat near the grave of her aunt, he should open his heart, declare how dear she was to him, and entreat that he might be permitted to love and protect her all through life.

Briefly she told him of her humble birth, but in describing her country home among the Pennsylvania hills, she unconsciously drew a glowing picture of its charms.

"My parents," she continued, "are poor and uneducated, and you would be ashamed of them. Indeed, I fear I would myself." Her eyes drooped, her face became troubled.

"It does not matter, darling," he re-

plied; "only say that you care for me—that I may call you my own. That is all I ask. It is yourself, not your relatives, I seek."

He pleaded fervently, drew her closer to him, and listened for the reply, which came presently, to his great joy and satisfaction, while the summer breezes sighed amid the tall grass, and the moon lighted with a dim holy radiance the entire scene, *bathing in brilliancy the lonely grave they were about to leave forever.*

Slowly, and with tears upon her cheeks, Mary walked from the sacred spot, but with a new light in her eyes and a new hope in her heart, for she knew that henceforth she would be a treasure to the one she loved.

Mrs. Van Ness advised them to be married immediately upon their return.

"But quietly," she said, "will be the best under all the circumstances, and I will give the wedding-breakfast. After your return you can settle yourselves as you like, but let me manage the wedding, my dears."

Mary having inherited the large fortune of her aunt, including the house on Madison Avenue, it was arranged, according to her wishes, that it should be their home.

Immediately after her wedding she wrote to her parents, telling them of the death of her aunt, of her marriage, and sent a draft to a large amount as a present, and also her address, in case they should wish to write. She also stated her intention of visiting her old home during the coming summer.

CHAPTER II.

"MOTHER," said Farmer Gager, coming into the kitchen one cool November morning, "what say ye ter making Mary Ann a visit—me, and you, and Alvira?"

"Wal, Simon, I've bin thinkin' myself that I should like ter see Mary Ann in her grand house; but then, yer know, it will cost er good deal ter go thar."

"What ef it does? I don't owe er cent in thier world. The old place am all clear, and a cool hundred or two stowed away in ther old stockin', thanks tew Mary Ann."

After the usual amount of argument it was decided that they should visit their rich daughter in the city, who, all unconscious of the honor in store for her, had one evening invited her aristocratic sisters-

in-law, with a few gentlemen friends of her husband, to dine with them.

Van Ness thought he had never seen his wife looking so lovely, and was not a little gratified by the admiration she received. She was dressed in an elegant purple satin robe, trimmed with rich lace, while diamonds flashed and sparkled with every movement of her delicate white hand, and at her tiny shell-like ears, and a brilliant gem of rare size and purity held at her throat a knot of lace. Every motion was characterized by grace. She always seemed to say the right thing at the right time without vanity. Gifted with a refined taste, and intellect very much above the ordinary class, and which by the judicious training of her aunt had been made the most of, she was indeed a lady in every sense of the word.

At the very moment the dinner was announced all were startled by a most furious ringing of the doorbell. A servant flew to obey the unusual summons, and there upon the doorstep stood Farmer Gager and his portly wife, while, Alvira brought up the rear.

"Does Mary Ann live here?"

"How dumb yer be, Simon! Do yer s'pose he knows her by that name? Does Miss Van Ness live here? 'Cause if she does, she's our own darter!" exclaimed Mrs. Gager, with a wonderful air of importance.

Mrs. Van Ness comprehended the true state of things at once, as did also all the guests, for the boisterous tones of her father and the loud ones of her mother had not only reached them, but had penetrated to the kitchen and the ears of the servants.

For a moment the room swam round before the eyes of the hostess. She grew faint and dizzy as the truth was forced upon her. Then she rallied all her self-control, and stepped to the side of her husband, and said:

"Mortimer, I think my father and mother have concluded to surprise us. Will you be kind enough to wait for a moment, until I can dispose of them? They will prefer quiet and rest after their journey, and will soon excuse me, I am confident."

"Certainly," he replied.

She was just in the act of passing out into the hall, when who should loom up in the door but Father Gager, lugging a great old-fashioned hair trunk, with his

name emblazoned thereon with brass nails? As he caught sight of the scarlet face of his daughter, he dropped his burden and made great strides towards her, while he shouted in tones of thunder:

"Wal, Mary Ann, if that haint you! How do you do? Bless my soul, ef yer haint pootler than ever!" And he hugged her in his arms, and gave her a kiss which resounded through the room.

Meanwhile Mother Gager had stepped over the trunk, with a huge basket that looked as if it had come out of the ark, and stood panting and exclaiming, impatiently:

"Come, come, Simon! better gin me, ther girl's own mother, er chance some time ter night, hadn't yer?"

The next moment, regardless of her daughter's elegant dress, she had folded her to her ample breast, and was shedding some very natural tears over her.

"Bless yer, Mary Ann! it's four years and better since I sot my two eyes on yer, and all erlong from ther depot to herè I felt as ef ther kerriga couldn't be druv fast enuff."

Next appeared Elvira—a great creature, as unlike Mrs. Van Ness as an elephant and a humming-bird. She was dressed in the most gorgeous purple, with a "high-falutin" hat trimmed with green, and a couple of red poppy flowers, and a bunch of coarse grass, from which dangled bunches of great glass beads to represent dew. She was also overburdened with extra shawls, and an immense black satchel. Her great round eyes were staring at the elegant decorations of the room and its occupants, and she scarcely returned the greeting of her lady sister, who had only for a moment given way to feelings of shame and mortification. "They are my parents," she thought, "the tender guardians of my childhood, and although ignorant and unacquainted with the usages of society, are respectable and honest." Then she welcomed them cordially and gracefully, and introduced them to her husband and guests.

"Glad tew see yer," exclaimed Father Gager, clasping his son-in-law's hand in his great horny one.

Mrs. Van Ness cut the scene short by conducting her relatives to rooms up stairs. But it was not until her mother had informed all the company that the great basket contained some old-fashioned doughnuts and a "leetle jar of sourkrout," that

she had taken the greatest pains to make, for Mary Ann "used ter be so fond of them when she was a leetle gal at hum."

The giggling servant who carried up their luggage was at once toned down into respect and sobriety by one frigid look of his mistress. When dinner was at last served, Mrs. Van Ness was all dignity and self-possession, presiding like a queen, and the brilliancy of her color and occasional glitter of her eyes alone revealed that anything disturbed the even tenor of her ways. With rare tact and skill she covered up the mistakes of her relatives, which were at times so ludicrous as to provoke a smile even from her lips, especially when her father declared that he was as hungry as a "dray hoss," and that he would have "er pint of that air supe." She quietly ordered his dish replenished; and when her mother insisted that they should all try some of her doughnuts, she sent a servant for the basket, and had a plate of the great brown cakes placed among the desserts, declaring it took her back again to the old farmhouse among the hills. All laughingly partook of them, and even the grand Misses Van Ness condescended to compliment the plebeian cakes.

That night, when her parents and sister had retired, and when the company had departed, the hostess whispered to her husband, as she put her arms about his neck, with her eyes brimming with tears:

"Darling, I regret so much for your sake that my parents should have chosen to visit us. It will, I know, furnish gossip for your fashionable friends."

"Never mind, love," he returned. "You have taught me to-night a lesson of independence, and by the treatment of your relatives proclaimed their true worth. Let us make their stay a pleasant one. They are good and honest people, with great warm hearts, and if they are a little homespun and coarse, you and I can at least appreciate them, and in our integrity and happiness can afford to laugh at the world, or at least act independent of their foolish opinions."

After the visit was over, and Father and Mother Gager and Elvira were once again gathered around the wide-mouthed fireplace in the kitchen, they had great stories to tell to a few neighbors, who seemed to think they had been upon a journey to the other end of the world.

"Such a palace as my Mary Ann lives in!" said Mother Gager. "Why, they actually have washbasins with silver—yes, silver tubes, for ther hot and cold water ter run through. Taen they have leetle silver knobs on ther side of every door, and if yer jest turns one on 'em a bell rings way down in the kitchen, and er hired gal runs up and kurtseys as perlite as kin be. And then they have er hole in ther wall all lined tew with silver, and Mary Ann jest sticks her mouth, and tells them away down stairs what she wants fer dinner, and she don't have ter holler, nuther. It seemed as though Simon would never git used ter fine fixin's—and ther mistakes he did keep makin'!"

"Wal, mother, while yer at it," he retorted, "s'pose yer tell as how yer blowed

out the gas, and liked ter have choked us all ter death."

As for Elvira, she came back so fixed up and "stuck up," as her father said, that she could hardly notice her country friends. Hadn't she been to the city, and while there lived like "Queen Victory?" she said; and, in the simplicity of her nature, she had no idea that her majesty lived a whit in more grand style than did Mary Ann, who found the old homestead among the hills a blessed retreat from the heat and turmoil of the city during many a summer season.

More than one little aristocratic Van Ness roamed with her through the old familiar woods, or took many a precious nap upon the huge feather beds under the ample roof of "Grandmother Gager."